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MARCH 2002

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INTERNET LIFE®

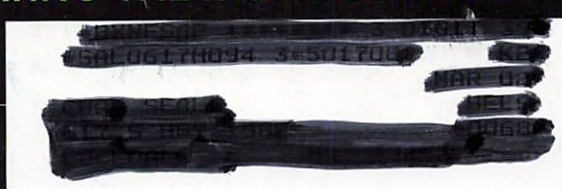
20 Biggest Net scams!

...and how to avoid them

GADGETS THAT DO IT ALL

SEXUAL NO-NO'S ONLINE

RATING THE MUSIC SERVICES



THE NEW NISSAN XTERRA. One minute, it's a rock-climbing, gear-hauling 4x4. The next, a M.A.S.H. unit on wheels. It seems the Xterra has many inventive uses. Of course, with the help of rugged, low-range gearing, ample ground clearance, and an available new 210-horsepower

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supercharged V6, we fully expect you to create some ingenious applications of your own. (Not all involving pain and swelling, we hope.) Call 1-877-XTERRA8 or visit NissanDriven.com for more info. The new Xterra: Still everything you need, nothing you don't.

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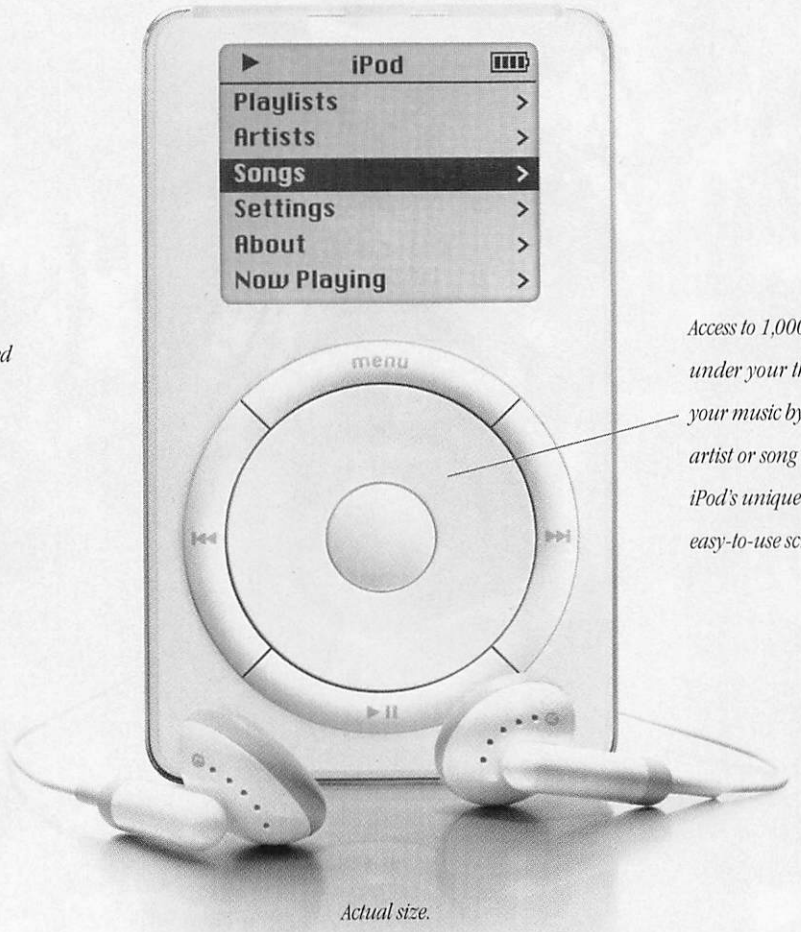
Don't steal music. *Requires CD-RW drive. ^Capacity based on 4 min. per song/160Kbps. §Battery life varies by use. #Requires Mac with FireWire and Mac OS 9.2 (or later) or Mac OS X v10.1

Think different.

Super-fast FireWire auto-updating

When you first plug iPod into your Mac, all of your iTunes songs and playlists are automatically downloaded into iPod at blazing FireWire speed. Then, when you add new music or rearrange playlists in iTunes, simply plug iPod back in and it's automatically updated in seconds. It simply doesn't get any easier or faster than this.



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EDITOR'S NOTE

A Reporting Revolution

SOMETHING THAT SHOULD REASSURE YOU ABOUT THIS magazine's editors and contributors is that though we're Internet enthusiasts, we have other lives. Honest—we don't spend every waking moment online. (Well, most of us don't; I confess I have to shake our *Y-Life* tree every once in a while to make sure the occasional someone can unplug and still walk upright.) The most obvious example of an "other lifer" on our roster is **ROGER EBERT**, who does a bit of movie reviewing when he's not writing his column for us.

Another one is Privacy Watch columnist **ROBERT SCHEER**, who also writes a syndicated political column for the *Los Angeles Times.* I mention him this month because his most recent "offline" work involved being among the very first reporters to expose the connections between the Enron bankruptcy and the Bush administration.

Okay, maybe it's not so offline after all. When a media reporter for *The Washington Post* inquired of Scheer, "How did you get onto it so early?" Scheer replied, "Google."

His answer not only proves one of our favorite points about the mainstreaming of Internet life, but also suggests the way one profession has been transformed, relatively unheralded, outside the torrent of dot-com debris rushing by. We read about online journalism—whether it's better than the offline kind, which news sites are best, which are failing—but we don't as often hear how the Net has changed the way traditional beat reporters and researchers gather information.

"Before, it would have taken me six months to track down this story," says Scheer. "Just the travel alone, the visits to a dozen news archives in different cities—you'd have to lug dusty tomes and beg for permission to photocopy something. Now, once you've written something, there are the online tips from regular people that help you advance the story. Who knows where they come by the information, but a fast search gets you corroborati onto something. Everything's on the record n ere." Of course, that's exactly what Scheer war n his privacy column every month. Life's pecul .

On the other hand, contributing write **SHER KAISER** didn't have to look too far beyond h-box this month to compile our list of the 20 na cams. However, her search for how to avoid them arther afield. Read, back. **MICHAEL LEAR** sts an equally skeptic me of the new music ites in "Time to Face ." His conclusion, an e new commercial off e some nice bells and but until there's a juk ce with universal mus n, reasonable fees (h 10 subscriptions to p lists will you sign up fo he good sense to thro rippling copy protectio usic" will play on. The fa ere's also a growing armada of users now swapping fil V shows on many of these very services, right beh ir music-sharing brethren, should be a shot across t f the entertainment industry: Get your acts toget ntinue to do battle with the people who are among gest fans.

We read about online journalism, but we don't as often hear how the Net has changed the way traditional reporters and researchers gather information

On a stylish note, check out our fas ction this month, shot by the very hot photographer **S NYVANG**. I think we have a unique approach to fash eads in this magazine, blending style, wit, and a Net ho ean, where else do you find a fashion shoot subtitle nk Heaven for Literal URLs"? Nowhere, that's whe

X Barry Golson

BARRY GOLSON, ED IN CHIEF

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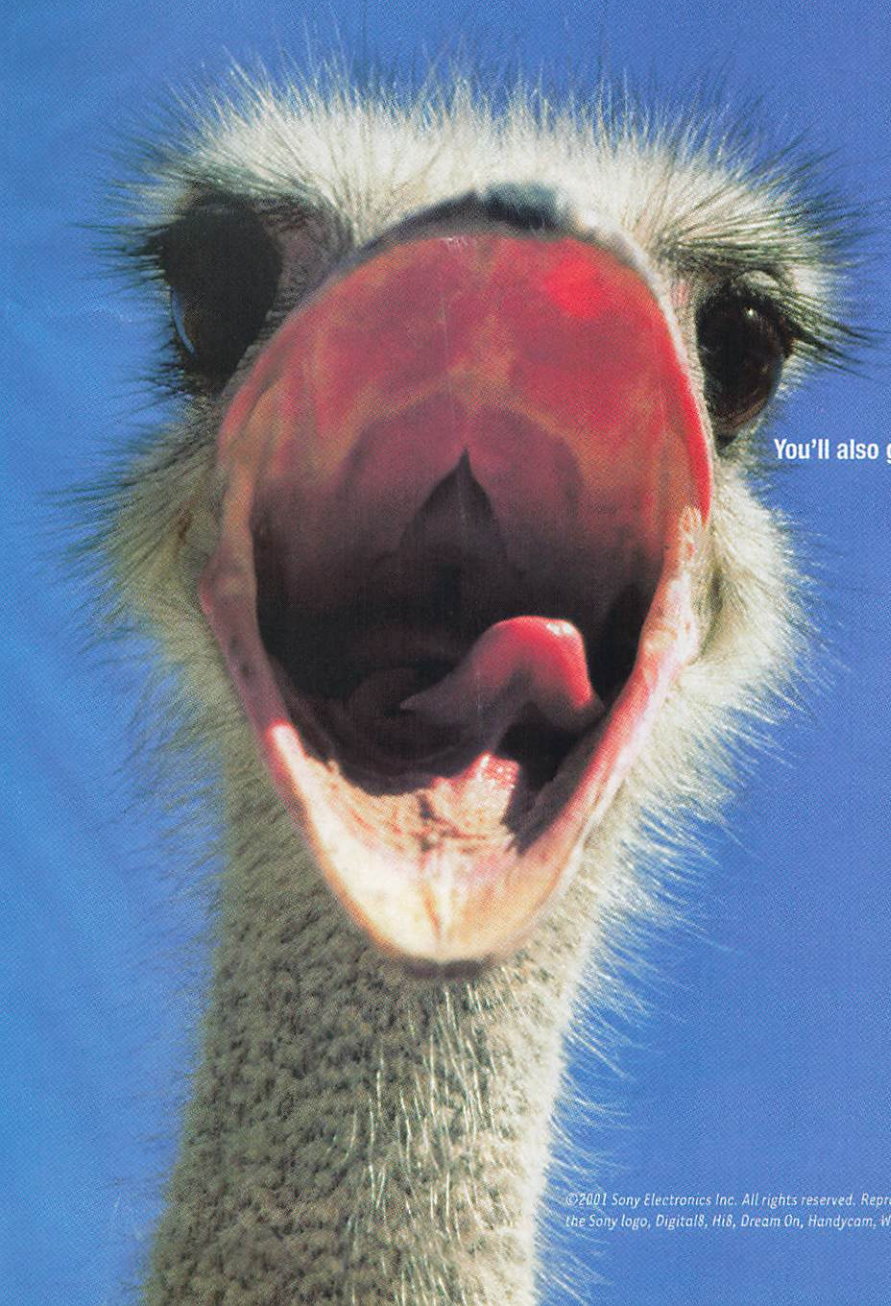

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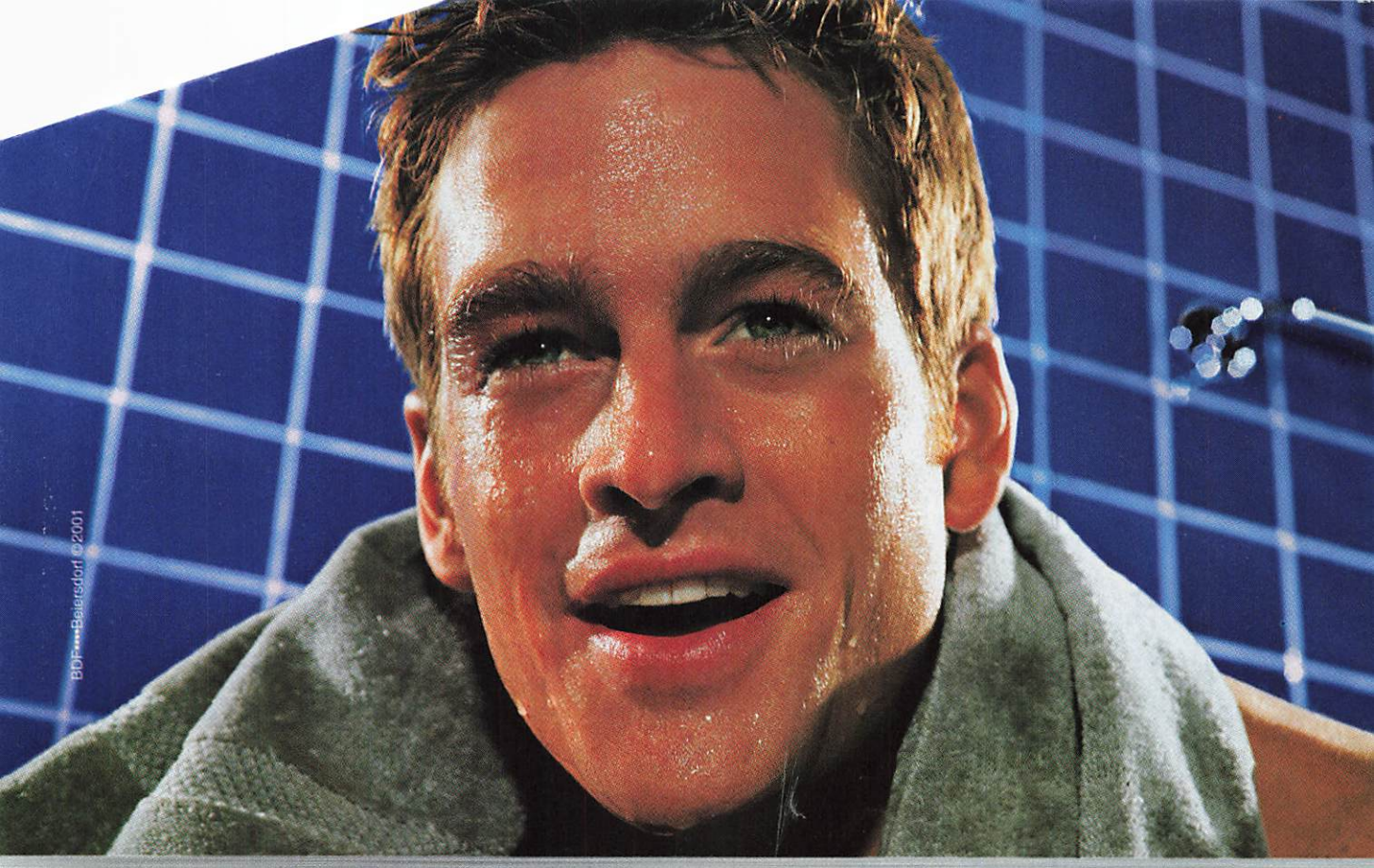

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CONTENTS

FEATURES

56 **WIRED HOOPS**
How has basketball managed to become the most wired game in sports? And what does that mean for hoops lovers? An obsessive-compulsive guide to b-ball BY TY WENGER

60 **DIGITAL DAVE'S GOT GAME**
The NBA commissioner has outdone the competition. What's his secret? David Stern speaks BY BILGE EBIRI

62 **IF WEB ADDRESSES CAME TO LIFE**
Or, thank heaven for literal URLs—a spring fashion special PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEFAN NYVANG

70 **TESTING THE MUSIC SITES**
Digital music services are up and running—but are they worth your time and money? We rate the new pay-to-play sites. PLUS: Free music still thrives BY MICHAEL LEARMONTH

74 **20 NET SCAMS**
Get rich quick. Miracle cures. Free vacations. Don't fall for the latest scheme that lands in your e-mail in-box. Already a victim? We show you what to do now BY LAURA FISHER KAISER

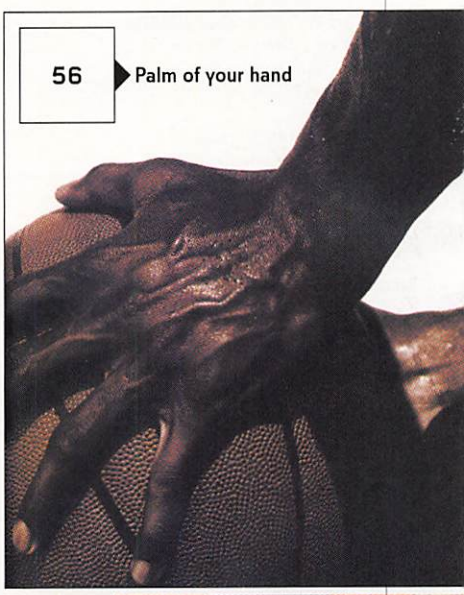
80 **THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL**
If you're tired of juggling all those gadgets in your pocket, you'll be glad to see these all-in-one devices. A roundup of the latest sanity-savers BY ERIC MEYERS

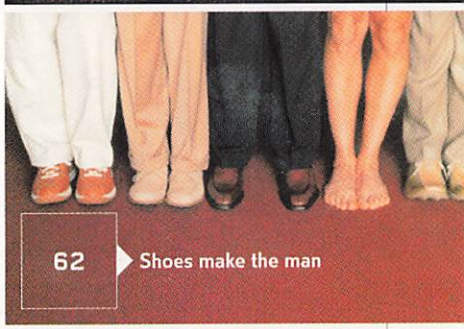
COLUMNS

52 **ROGER EBERT ▸ CRITICAL EYE** *In Cyberspace, Writing Is a Performance*
When the personal monitor begins to feel like a public space

54 **ANGELA GUNN ▸ NET ETHICS** *How to Get Hit On But Not Kissed*
Sexual no-no's online PLUS: how to deal with a secret cyber-smooch

55 **ROBERT SCHEER ▸ PRIVACY WATCH** *Hallelujah! Microsoft Sees the Light* Bill Gates endorses "trustworthy computing"





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Dell | Solutions

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- Epson® Stylus C80 Color Printer, $149 after $30 Epson Mail-In Rebate (reg. $179)[38]
- Lexmark™ Z53 Color Printer, $129
- Lexmark X83 All-In-One Print Center that Scans, Prints and Copies, $199
- HP Office Jet K80, $299

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- Kodak® DX3600 Digital Camera, $299

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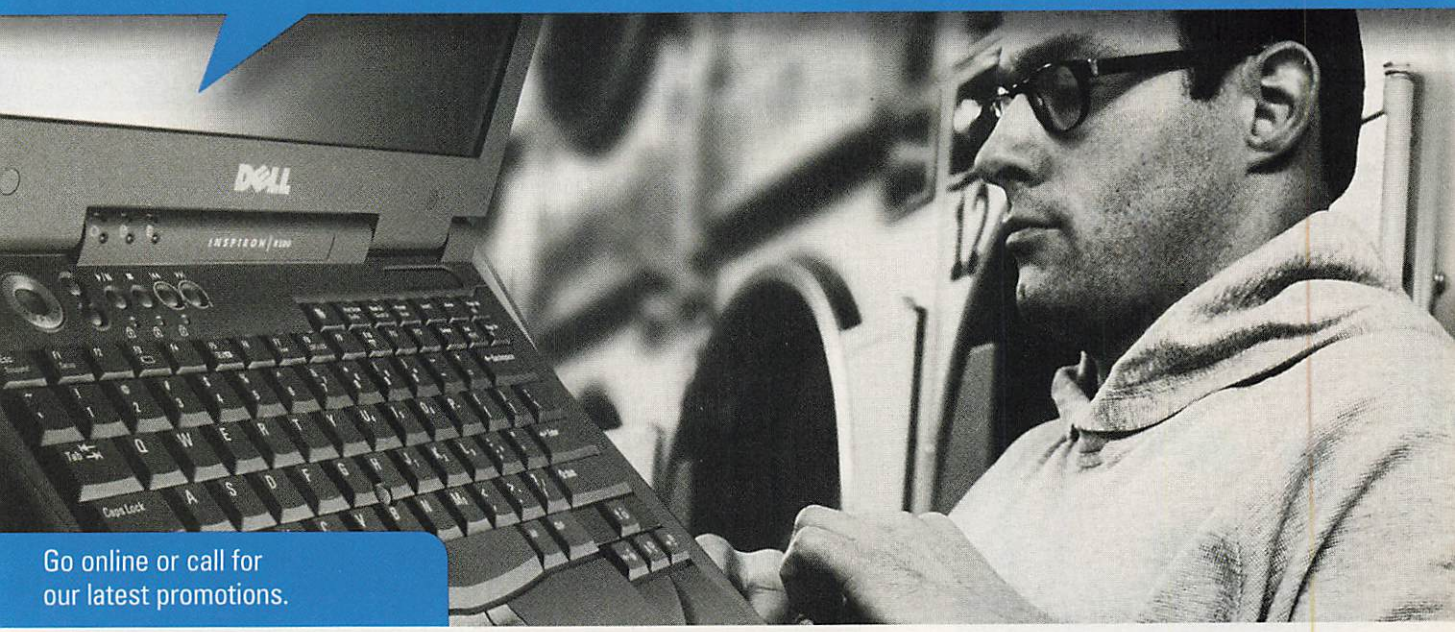

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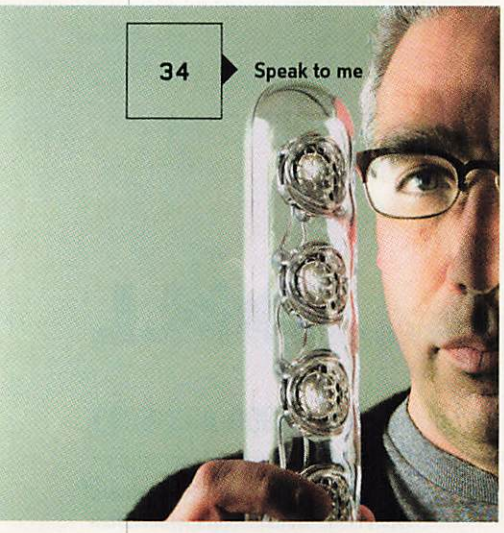
CONTENTS



DEPARTMENTS

6	**EDITOR'S NOTE** ▸ Outsmarting the Net scammers—and how one reporter smartly Googled his way to the Enron scandal
20	**MESSAGE CENTER** ▸ **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** We're listening
25	**CLICK!** Detailing a photographer's deadly story, finding the best Palm software, sprucing up your home office, getting deals on printer cartridges
32	**INCREDIBLY USEFUL SITES** Find the video you're dying to watch, price your old stuff, "cheat" on crosswords, track your favorite band
34	**OLD WAY/NET WAY** Comparison shopping for spiffy new computer speakers, saving sick old trees, using frequent-flier mileage
38	**STYLE** Open your eyes to must-have toiletries, find quality face time
40	**CONTENT** Thrashers hit the ice with Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, Spirit Creek is ready for real time, e-books get shut out of awards
43	**COOL TOOLS** A digital guard dog, a PDA watch, the wonders of the iPod, the latest incarnation of ReplayTV
48	**WEB USER** Untangle with wireless networking, add some spice to your e-mailing life, time-delay your messages in Outlook, advance your Googling
108	**PRETTY STRANGE** Take some advice from Mr. T, get into Alison's pants, help stamp out the badger problem, bet on what that cow's going to doo

WEB GUIDE

87	**WEB GUIDE** ▸ **NEW, NOTABLE & FUN REVIEWS** Entertainment news and gossip, dead rock stars, ticket brokers, travel discounts, winery tours, romantic getaways, snow sports, deals on mortgages, bargain-hunting
98	**WEB LAB** ▸ **BEST HOME-BUYING SITES** They say you can't go home again, but you can find a new one online. Also, best apartment rental, home improvement, and relocation sites BY ALAN COHEN

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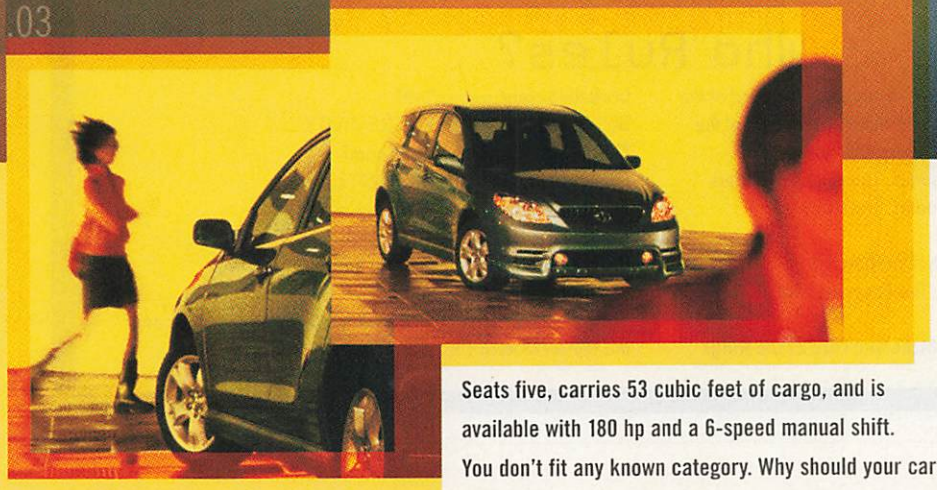

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Who Rules?

In conjunction with our December coverage of *The Lord of the Rings,* YIL.com staged the modestly titled "Great Lord of the Rings on the Net Contest," an Oscars-style award fest celebrating 25 sites in six categories. Thousands of surfers showed up to vote for their favorites. The winners:

BEST TOLKIEN MEGASITE: TheOneRing.net
BEST SITE FOR BEGINNERS: The Encyclopedia of Arda [glyphweb.com/arda]
BEST SPECIALIZED SITE: Ian McKellen: Lord of the Rings [mckellen.com/cinema/lotr]
BEST TOLKIEN-INSPIRED CREATIVITY: The Tolkien Trail [tolkientrail.com]
BEST TOLKIEN COMMUNITY SITE: Elendor [elendor.net]
BEST SITE FOR *SERIOUS* TOLKIEN FANS: Lord of the Rings Fanatics Site [lordotrings.com]

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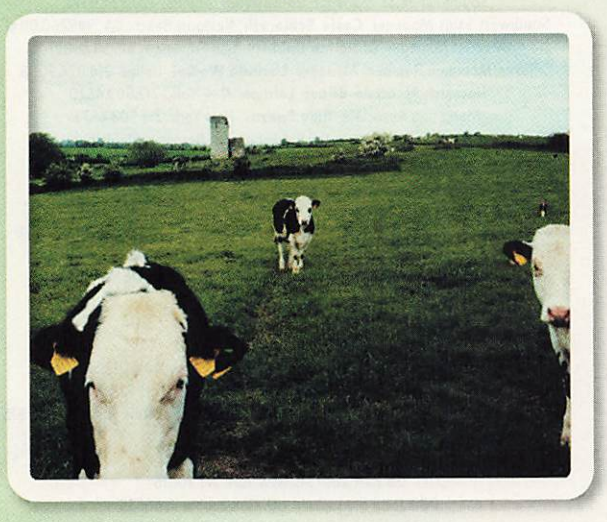
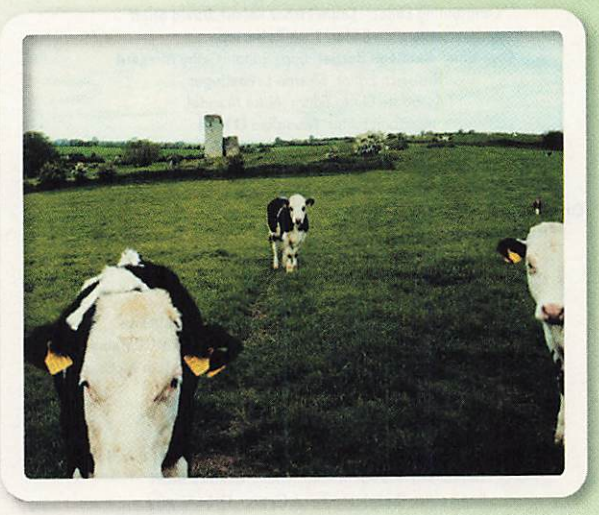


After music.



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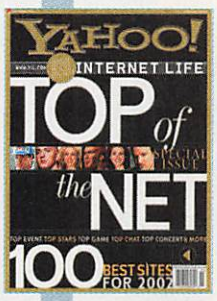

HE SAID, SHE SAID

In "100 Best Sites" [January '02, page 79] you list a "best" site for women, kids, Asians, African Americans, Latinos, and gays. Nothing for men or Caucasians. No wonder there are so many angry white males these days. I suppose a site for them would somehow be illegal.

LEE C.
@brew-master.com

I was surprised to find that your magazine seems geared toward men. Intelligent women are on the Internet as well.

JENNIFER VELASQUEZ
@msn.com

BAGGING NATIONAL IDS

I was somewhat dismayed by Robert Scheer's support of a national ID card [Privacy Watch, January '02, page 54]. He admits that it would not do anything to curb terrorism. He also states that the American people are willing to give up some of their freedoms for security. I think it was Ben Franklin who stated that when freedom is given up for security, you soon lose both. I am not in favor of buying security at the price of freedom.

ART KENNEDY
@wmonline.com

I disagree with Robert Scheer except when he noted that national ID cards would not stop terrorism. Anything made today can be copied and forged. Even the government's own systems are hacked. Under Hitler, the Jews were tattooed and given IDs. Is that what we want for our kids? No, thanks. We live in a democracy.

ALFRED DELEEL
@yahoo.com

FASTER, PLEASE

It has been said that the lack of broadband content is the main reason mainstream usage of DSL and cable broadband has not soared. Please help your readers find great broadband content, and we'll try it enthusiastically. Broadband users spend considerably more time surfing than dial-up users. So what gives? Give us some broadband coverage!

MIGUEL NUNEZ
@verizon.net

Technology Editor Don Willmott responds: More and more Y-Life readers are enjoying fast broadband connections. That's why we launched the Fat Pipe column in our Web Guide section last fall: to highlight sites and services that take advantage of broadband speed to deliver new kinds of content. This month, for example, we're focusing on two great services: Mediashare and MusicPlayground. Check them out on page 89.

ETHICAL ISOLATION

It was very disturbing to read Angela Gunn's statement [Net Ethics, December '01, page 68] that self-deception has no ethical significance because "ethics implies action in relation to another being." I grant that Gunn's view is a widely held academic position, but it is a thoroughly destructive one. The purpose of ethics is to guide people in living their lives. In her view, only the effects of actions on other people count in this regard, not the effect on oneself. Why should I take into account the effects of my actions on every other person in the world but ignore their consequences in my own life?

GARY McGATH
@primushost.com

Angela Gunn responds: Think of it like this: You are the last person on earth. You tell a lie. To whom? Who is affected? If you know it's a lie and you tell it to yourself, who the heck are you fooling, and in that case isn't the "lie" just empty words, entertainment, fiction? And if you don't know it's a lie, you're delusional, another condition that negates a great deal of ethical weight. Either way, the action only has effect and therefore import when it has an object nonprivileged by agency—or, in English, only when someone else is around to be affected by it.

THREE CHEERS FOR BIG BROTHER

I disagree with Robert Scheer's opinion [Privacy Watch, December '01, page 71] that the federal government should not be permitted to monitor our online activities. The invasion is warranted. Even if sophisticated criminals use codes or encryption to avoid prying eyes, their addresses will be discovered, patterns established, and an electronic trail created. Of course, electronic intelligence will never take the place of human intelligence, but it is an additional tool for the Feds to work with. The innocent have nothing to fear or hide. This type of online monitoring is long overdue. The Founding Fathers could not have conceived of the global reach of the Internet when they penned the Fourth Amendment. If King George's spies had had the ability to transmit sensitive information as we do today, I'm sure a bit of privacy invasion would have been tolerated.

MARK HAPP
@2z.net

THE BOOK VS. THE FILM

Tolkien purists have the right not to watch movies based on his books ["Hobbits Go Hollywood," December '01, page 104], but they're missing out. I am well aware of the liberties directors take when filming a book, but if they get the point across, I'm satisfied. I've seen *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* three times, and when I read the books again, I will still have my own imagination. I will not see what director Peter Jackson sees.

ERIC SHARPE
@verizon.net

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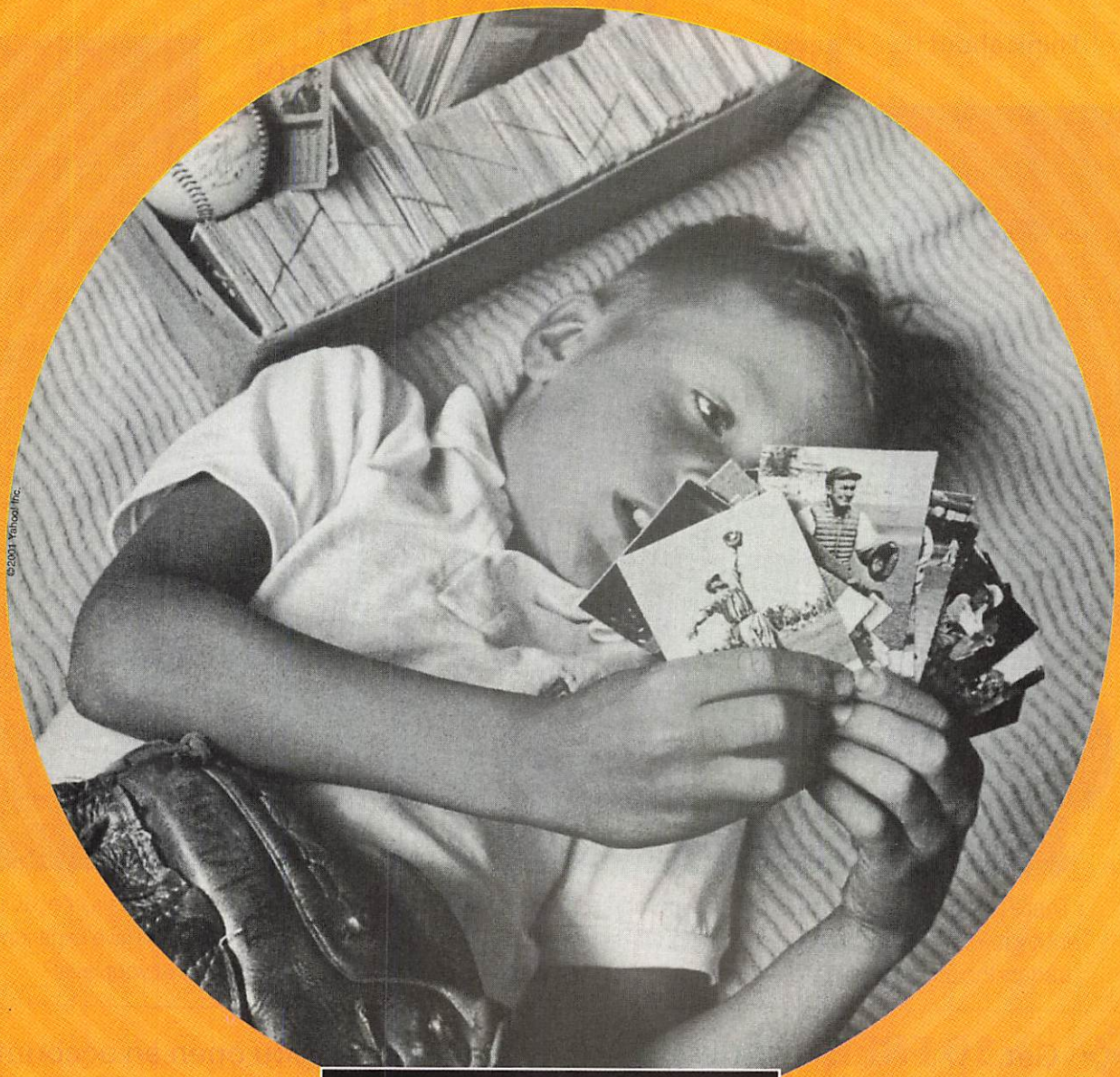

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People, Places, and Trends on the Net >>> Edited by Ron Bel Bruno

MARCH 2002

A LIFE CUT SHORT

By age 20, Dan Eldon had traveled four continents and organized a relief mission for victims of the civil war in Mozambique. Soon after, he captured some of the first shocking images of Somalia's famine, launching his career as a photojournalist for Reuters. In 1993, while covering a political uprising in Mogadishu, he was stoned to death along with three other journalists by an angry mob of Somalis. He was 22. Eldon's poignant personal journals are enshrined at **Inspired by the Life and Work of Dan Eldon [daneldon.org]**. These eclectic collages—created from snapshots of newspaper clippings, sketches, and various found objects—reflect the eyes-wide-open way Eldon absorbed his environs. Although the journals are housed in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, you can browse them on the Web. As one reporter put it, "You may never have heard of Dan Eldon, but once you do, you may never forget him." **MEAGHAN O'NEILL**

30 THERE'S MORE TO PDA COMPUTING THAN MANAGING TO-DO LISTS. **HOME & OFFICE** BROWSES THE BEST PALM SOFTWARE DOWNLOAD SITES

32 GOT A 1993 DEREK JETER BASEBALL CARD IN YOUR JUNK DRAWER? FIND OUT WHAT IT'S WORTH AT THIS **INCREDIBLY USEFUL SITE**

34 **OLD WAY/NET WAY** SEARCHES FOR SERIOUS COMPUTER SPEAKERS THAT'LL PUMP UP THE VOLUME AND DO JUSTICE TO YOUR MP3S

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Net Briefs

WHAT A GIRL WANTS

Christina Aguilera is the latest celeb to clash with sleazy Internet porn distributors. On her official Web site **[christina-a.com]**, the towheaded diva has refuted claims that she is the star of an X-rated video making the rounds online. Her statement goes on to threaten "criminal proceedings" against anyone fraudulently identifying her as the porn star.

NET GAINS, NET LOSSES

While the total number of people surfing the Net continues to increase, the actual number of Web sites declined by 182,142 during a one-month period from November to December 2001, according to Netcraft, a U.K.–based security consultancy. Its research indicates that site operators are increasingly reluctant to invest in registration fees and upkeep for older properties. Nonetheless, Netcraft says that the Web's global expansion will reverse this trend. So remember, there are just 36 million sites out there. Make them last.

IRS PCs MIA

In the "what goes around comes around" department, a recent self-audit at the Internal Revenue Service revealed that more than 2,300 of its computers are missing. The agency says the "lost" computers weren't storing personal taxpayer information, and there is no danger of sensitive financial data falling into the wrong hands.

I WANT MY MPC

The network that brought us Tom Green and Carson Daly has introduced its newest star: an MTV-branded home computer. The system, which will retail for about $1,800, comes equipped with a DVD-compatible CD drive and burner, radio and television tuners, and exclusive MTV content. And no, Gwen Stefani is *not* providing tech support.

IT'S NOT ME Pop queen Christina Aguilera says "no" to Web sites posting a porn video that stars an anonymous blond woman.

SURFERS BUY INTO STEREOTYPES

It's a first: More women than men shopped online during the holiday season, according to research from the **Pew Internet & American Life Project [www.pewinternet.org]**. Its study also reports that more than 29 million Americans shopped online during this time, spending approximately $392 per person (up from $330 in 2000). AOL's shopping channels won big, with sales up a record 72 percent from last year's holiday period.

DVD HACKER REELING

A happy ending for Hollywood? After pressure from the U.S entertainment industry, Norwegian authorities have brought charges against teenager Jon Johansen for his part in writing and releasing a program that cracks antipiracy DVD protections. Called DeCSS, the software lets DVD owners view movies on PCs and other platforms not approved by the Motion Picture Association of America. While Hollywood worries that surfers could use DeCSS to illegally copy and swap movies online and off, Johansen's supporters—including the **Electronic Frontier Foundation [eff.org]**—argue that he should not be put on trial for breaking into his own property (i.e., the disc itself). Johansen faces up to two years in prison if found guilty of the charges.

'Authorities have a responsibility to guarantee that this marvelous instrument serves the common good and does not become a source of harm'

POPE JOHN PAUL II, CALLING FOR REGULATION OF THE NET TO STEM THE SPREAD OF "DEGRADING" MATERIALS

THE CLICK AROUND THE NET CLIQUE: SCOTT ALEXANDER, ROB BERNSTEIN, MEAGHAN O'NEILL. WRITE TO CLICK AT CLICK@ZIFFDAVIS.COM

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Smart Moves... ...Dubious Deeds

CALIFORNIA URLS

California courts recently upheld the state's anti-spam legislation, which requires senders of unsolicited e-mail to provide recipients with a real return address or a toll-free number in the body of the message. When will Congress pass a federal law for the rest of us?

CAPTURING PEDO-FILES

Law enforcers in Sangamon County, Illinois, have begun installing monitoring software on convicted sex offenders' computers. The ever-vigilant program, called Cyber Sentinel, keeps an eye on probationers who chat or surf online and alerts officials to suspicious behavior.

THE TELLTALE HEART

Thanks to a high-tech defibrillator implant from Medtronics, heart-disease patients can wirelessly send cardiac-related data straight from their chests to the Net for analysis by physicians.

AOL REJECTS HARVARD!

Because of anthrax scares, Harvard University contacted most early-admission applicants via e-mail this year. However, between 75 and 100 of the letters were lost after AOL's spam filter incorrectly labeled the messages as junk mail.

THE TROJAN WAREZ

In January, antivirus software publisher Symantec discovered that certain versions of the popular file-sharing programs Grokster and LimeWire (and, some users say, KaZaA) carried a Trojan horse. The insidious program does not damage PC data but can secretly steal user info.

CUSTOMER DISSERVICE

This past holiday season, many e-tailers received failing grades in customer service. According to Jupiter Media Metrix, one-third of the 250 stores surveyed took more than three days to respond to shoppers' queries or didn't respond at all.

"The e-mail may or may not be stuck on the hard drive. The 'may or may not' part is really big enough to drive a car through"

JOAN FELDMAN, PRESIDENT OF COMPUTER FORENSICS, POSTULATING ON THE WHEREABOUTS OF DAMNING MESSAGES SENT BY ENRON EXECUTIVES

Top of the Net

SHOPPING

Fastest growing e-tail sites, according to Nielsen/NetRatings.

1 **COLUMBIA HOUSE** [columbiahouse.com]
2 **FINGERHUT.COM**
3 **OVERSTOCK.COM**
4 **OFFICE DEPOT** [officedepot.com]
5 **APPLE** [apple.com]

Rankings reflect traffic during November and December 2001.

MUSIC VIDEOS

Top five streams at Yahoo! Launch [launch.yahoo.com].

1 **SHAKIRA,** "Whenever, Wherever"
2 **NO DOUBT,** "Hey Baby"
3 **BRITNEY SPEARS,** "I'm a Slave 4 U"
4 **LINKIN PARK,** "In the End"
5 **ENRIQUE IGLESIAS,** "Hero"

Rankings reflect downloads during the week ending 1/3/02.

ENTERTAINMENT

The five most popular movie stars, as voted by visitors to Harris Interactive [www.harrisinteractive.com].

1 **JULIA ROBERTS**
2 **TOM HANKS**
3 **HARRISON FORD**
4 **MEL GIBSON**
5 **SEAN CONNERY**

Rankings reflect surfers' votes during the period November 9-14, 2001.

netobsessions

The Thing

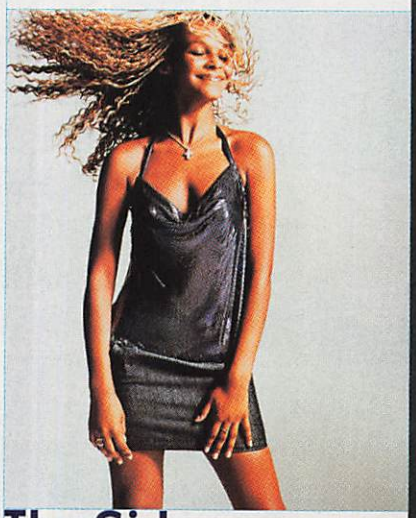
THE TWO TOWERS

Our seats may still be warm from the first film, but we're already antsy for the release of the next installment of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings.* Catch up on your Middle-earth lore @ **TheOneRing.net.**

The Guy

JAKE GYLLENHAAL

After star turns in the indie surprise *Donnie Darko* and the much-maligned *Bubble Boy,* this up-and-comer is cast opposite Dustin Hoffman in *Goodbye Hello.* Join his fans @ **Jake Gyllenhaal [jakegyllenhaal.com].**



The Girl

SAMANTHA MUMBA

The 19-year-old Dubliner is the latest songster to go Hollywood. This month, she makes her big-screen debut in the remake of H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine.* Read about her future @ **The Official Website of Samantha Mumba [samanthamumba.com].**

GYLLENHAAL: JENNIFER LIVINGSTON/CPI; MUMBA: SEAN COOK/CPI

Sound BLASTER

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24-bit Audio that will Astound you...

Connectivity that will Empower you

SB1394

Easily Transfer and Create Home Movies

Back up Massive Data and MP3 Files

Low Latency LAN-Like Gameplay

Sound Blaster® Audigy™ Platinum eX with dual SB1394 ports

Sound Blaster® Audigy™ offers stunning audio quality with 100dB SNR, 24-bit audio clarity and EAX® ADVANCED HD™ effects. Combine that with the power of the integrated SB1394™ port and you have the definitive PC audio solution. The SB1394™ offers optimum performance and speed by allowing you to connect up to 63 other IEEE® 1394 enabled devices including external hard drives, hi-speed CDRWs and other Sound Blaster® Audigy™ cards. With an amazing transfer rate of up to 400 Mbps, it enables you to seamlessly transfer/back-up massive MP3 collections, enjoy low latency LAN-like multi-player gameplay and PC to PC networking and also hook up your DV Camcorder to edit your home videos.

Learn more about Audigy™ ADVANCED HD™ and SB1394™ at **www.soundblaster.com**.

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24bit 96kHz/100dB SNR

EAX ADVANCED HD

DOLBY DIGITAL

CREATIVE

SAVE TIME AND MONEY

PALMS AWAY

NEED SPORTS STATS ON THE GO? COOL PDA SOFTWARE CAN HELP

If you use a Palm-based personal digital assistant, you're familiar with its basic features: calendar, address book, to-do list, and memos. But if you use it only for tapping in names and dates, you've merely scratched the surface of your Palm's talents. One simple program turns the Palm into a TV remote control, for instance. Other applications store recipes for chefs, track stats for baseball fans, and serve up local newspapers for news addicts. Numerous sites offer these programs either for free or inexpensively. Once downloaded to your PC and integrated with your Palm Desktop software, these programs automatically install themselves on your PDA the next time you HotSync. To search for a particular program, visit **CNet Shareware.com [shareware.com]**, or head directly to one of the Palm software portals listed below. **JEREMY CAPLAN**

SITE	MOST POPULAR FREE DOWNLOAD	MOST POPULAR PAID DOWNLOAD	OTHER FEATURES
EUROCOOL [EUROCOOL.COM]	Palmasutra 2 (a compact version of the Kama Sutra)	AnyExpense (tracks expenses) $19.95	Foreign-language and international software
HANDANGO [HANDANGO.COM]	Mirror (turns Palm into a mirror)	Word Doc Converter (converts Microsoft Word documents to PalmOS) $5	Palm accessories, clearance specials
PALM BOULEVARD [PALMBLVD.COM]	Blocks 1.2 (a Tetris-like game)	Afterburner 3.0w (speeds up Palm performance) $8	Palm-related news and message boards
PALMGEAR.COM	BigClock 2.83 (features a timer, stopwatch, and world time)	SilverScreen 2.3.3 (enhances screen interface), $19.95	13,000 available titles, tips, and tricks for Palm systems

netsavers

Office Style

SAVE MONEY

It just isn't a good idea to run a business from the dining room table. Serious work-at-homers set up sensible offices to make themselves feel organized and productive—and to keep the mess contained. Start designing your home work space at **FurnitureFind.com**, which offers a few dozen varieties of desk chairs in leather or fabric from about $100 to $600. You'll also find armoire-like computer furniture (from about $700 to $2,600) that can hide your entire office setup once the end of the day rolls around. These cabinets are designed to let you run all that wiring down the back and out of sight. If you don't see what you're looking for, send off an e-mail to the store's Personal Shopper service and let it suggest something that fits your needs.

Think Ink

SAVE MONEY

Good color printers don't cost very much anymore, but those replacement ink cartridges...ouch, why are they so expensive? Actually, they aren't—if you know where to look. Find the best prices at **InkSell.com**, which carries cartridges compatible with just about every model from the top printer manufacturers. Typical prices are at least 15 percent below brand-name retail, but search around the site for discounts of up to 70 percent. While you're there, check out prices on ink-jet paper for both regular prints and photos. Anyone who's been getting into digital photography will immediately appreciate the savings. If you use a laser printer, look for discounts of up to 50 percent on toner cartridges. **DON WILLMOTT**

PDA USER: ZEFA FASTFORWARD/PHOTONICA

Get online with MSN.

To sign up for MSN Internet Access, call (800) FREE MSN.

Search
Hyperactivity.

Shopping
Buy book on raising twin boys.

People & Chat
Get advice about teaching kids to share.

Money
Check account balance for spa getaway.

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With MSN,® the Internet service from Microsoft, you'll see just how useful the Web can be. Built with advanced Microsoft® technology and tuned for Broadband, MSN is a great alternative to AOL. With the most popular e-mail and search,* plus great shopping, finance, and music, MSN has everything you need to get on the Web and everything you want when you get there. **Visit msn.com today.**

More Useful Everyday

* Jupiter Media Metrix: Custom category as defined by Microsoft, September 2001, U.S.

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THIS MONTH'S MOST PRACTICAL DESTINATIONS BY JEREMY CAPLAN

Look Up International Phone Numbers

When you need to dial Sven in Sweden or Orshy in Hungary, don't slog through confusing calls to faraway operators or tiresome trips to your local public library's dusty international phone-book collection. You can track down phone numbers from Grozny to Grenada at **www.PhoneNumbers.net**. As a bonus, some countries' search results come with maps, so you can see where your friends live. (You may need to hit AltaVista Translator if you don't read Russian.)

Find a Video Nearby

You want to see *Jaws 2* (you have a thing for self-torture), and you want to see it tonight (you have a thing for instant gratification). But if you trek down to the local video store, there's no way of knowing if it even has the tape in its collection. So, being exceptionally intelligent, you call ahead and find out that yes, the store stocks it, but another Roy Scheider fan has made off with it. No problem. Enter your ZIP code and the title of the flick at **ForMovies.com [formovies.com]**, and the site will come up with a list of nearby stores that stock it. You'll be on Amity Island by nightfall.

Get Free Legal Advice

Why give hundreds of dollars to lawyers when all you're looking for are straightforward answers to general legal questions: When is arbitration binding? What is the Truth in Lending Act? **FreeAdvice.com** offers easy-to-understand replies to hundreds of frequently asked legal questions in more than 20 categories, from accidents to intellectual property. It's a great first stop for anyone who needs to quickly get up to speed on a legal situation, but of course should not substitute for consultation with an attorney.

Pick a Chat

Whatever your mood or interest, **Ultimate Chatlist [chatlist.com]** will find you a place to gab. Grumble about your favorite stock's recent tumbles, or catch up on the latest Hollywood gossip. Sing the praises of your favorite band, or heap scorn on the newest *Lord of the Rings* fan fiction. Not sure what subject to dive into? Use the listings to find an interesting topic.

Search Financial Sites

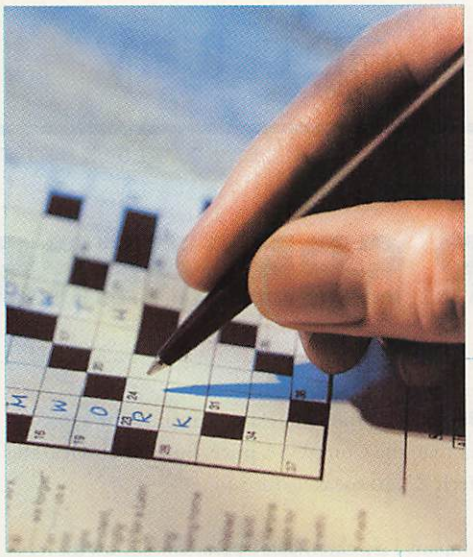
When you're seeking specific business information, getting 8,000 irrelevant search results isn't just unhelpful, it's counterproductive. Instead of digging through reams of results, use a targeted search engine such as **FinanceWise [www.financewise.com]**. Only financial pages are indexed by the site's editors.

Price Your Collectibles

When you're finally ready to sell that buffalo nickel or Mickey Mantle card, don't head for eBay until you've visited **Collectors Universe [collectors.com]**. Here you can get the scoop on your stuff's value, along with info on authenticating your autographs and trading cards and grading your rare coins and stamps. You can also use the site to keep up with market news and find out where to send your items for professional appraisal.

SEND US NEWS OF YOUR USEFUL FIND! WRITE TO IUS@ZIFFDAVIS.COM

RUSSIAN MAN: CHRIS SANDERS/GETTY IMAGES; NIXON PLATE: WALLY McNAMEE/CORBIS



Solve Crossword Puzzles

What's a six-letter word for something that helps you conquer crossword puzzles? *Solver*—as in **AllWords.com: Crossword Solver [allwords.com/solver]**, the cruciverbalist's best friend. The site lets you search for words starting with, ending with, or containing any combination of letters. Just fill in the letters you know and search away. And since you're doing the searching yourself, it's not really cheating, right?

Check Out Concert Tours

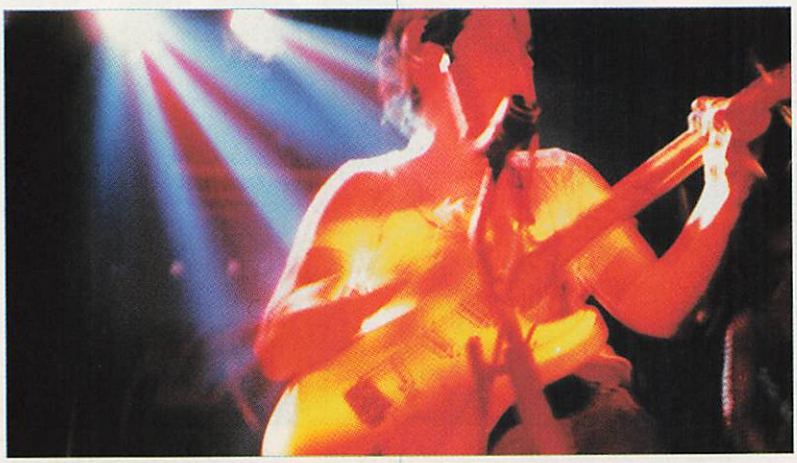
Live music is one of life's great joys, but how do you keep up with when and where your favorite artists are touring? **Pollstar [pollstar.com]** keeps tabs on more than 23,000 events, including everyone from Garbage to Yo-Yo Ma. Register and the site will send an e-mail when your performers of choice update their tour schedules. The site is also searchable by city or venue if you want to find an event that's close to home.

Pick the Right Stock

Buying stocks online is easy. Choosing ones that suit your investment strategy is what's tricky. Make sure potential purchases are aligned with your financial profile with **Yahoo! Finance: Stock Screener [screen.yahoo.com/stocks.html]**, free of charge. Don't mind living dangerously? How about a biotechnology stock with a low price/earning ratio and a thumbs-up from stock watchers? Punch in your choices and within a minute, you'll have a list of stocks to consider.

Plan Your Painting

Bright orange may have seemed to be a good idea at the time. But when you're ready to repaint your living room a more soothing color, use the **MetLife: Paint Calculator [metlife.com/Lifeadvice/Tools/Paintcalc]** to figure out how much paint you'll need to get the job done. Just type in the dimensions of the room and the number of coats and primer you intend to use, and the service determines the amount of paint required.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE: TONY HUTCHINGS/GETTY IMAGES; CONCERT: LOMO/NONSTOCK

...and downloads

PLAN YOUR NUPTIALS

This is the time of year when bridal magazines tend to get extra-thick and all those early-summer weddings start to take shape. **My Wedding Organizer [weddingsoft.com]** begins with the all-important basics of address-list management, so you can keep track of invitations (the two families can merge their separate lists into one), RSVPs, and gifts. But there's more: From the first automated to-do list to the last customized thank-you note, the software has a tool for every aspect of the event. *Free for 30 days; $34.95 to buy.*

KEEP THE CONNECTION

If your ISP has the annoying habit of tossing you offline after a few minutes of inactivity (AOL is a known offender), **Stay Connected! [inklineglobal.com]** keeps the connection alive. By simulating mouse movements, it tricks the ISP into thinking you're still there, even if you're out to lunch. No more inopportune hang-ups or time-wasting redials. *Free to try; $19.95 to buy.*

PALM-SIZE WEB PAGES

It's easier than you might think to take the Web with you, even without a Net-enabled PDA. **WebWhacker for Palm [bluesquirrel.com]** specializes in converting sites into pages viewable on a Palm device. As you surf, just pick those pages you'll want to read later, and the next time you HotSync, the text and images will be sent to the device. You can even beam them to another Palm user via IR. *$49.95* **DON WILLMOTT**

COMPARING THE TRIED-AND-TRUE WITH THE NET-AND-NEW BY DAVID SHEFF

BUYING COMPUTER SPEAKERS

OLD WAY

1 The built-in speakers in my son's iMac are fine for NPR feeds, but he wants to blast out music in his college dorm, particularly now that he burns his own CDs.

2 His birthday is coming up, so I visited our local CompUSA, where a salesman suggested speakers by Monsoon (model MH-502, $99) or Altec Lansing (ATP3W, $65).

3 Listened to them, along with a few others, but a friend had recommended a particular set made by Logitech. The store didn't carry them. Decided to try the Net.

TIME ELAPSED 40 minutes shopping and listening

COMMENTS Speakers cost from $19 to $400.

NET WAY

1 **BestBuy.com** had the same Altec Lansings for $79.99—higher than the CompUSA price. BestBuy also had the Logitech Z-340 speakers for $49.

2 To compare, I checked **Apple [apple.com]** and saw the cool-looking Harman Kardon iSub speaker with SoundSticks ($199). But I stuck to my original plan and found the speakers I was after—Logitech Z-340 2.1—for $49. Placed the order here, although I would have been in fine shape at BestBuy, too.

TIME ELAPSED 32 minutes surfing

COMMENTS The speakers were delivered within a week for a nominal charge ($5).

EDEN ROBBINS

WINNER: NET WAY As a result of my gift, my son is perilously close to being booted from the dorm.

Order BellSouth® FastAccess® DSL
for your family and get a FREE month.*

> faster downloads >>> connect >> and create something

BELLSOUTH®

Getting BellSouth® FastAccess® DSL is a smart move.

A high-speed Internet connection is a must-have for a 21st-century family like yours. It will free up your phone line, it will help your kids do better in school, and you might learn a few new things, too.

BellSouth® **FastAccess®** Internet Service

Check out all these benefits of FastAccess DSL:

Speed: Surf the Web and download large files in minutes instead of hours. Get e-mail attachments, digital photos, music and film clips up to 50 times faster than with a dial-up connection.** (As compared to 28.8K modems.)

Value: For only $45 a month, FastAccess DSL delivers unlimited high-speed Internet access.*** And it allows you to talk on the phone and surf the Internet at the same time on the same phone line.

Hassle-Free: Get rapid access to the Internet and eliminate long waits and dial-up hassles. Since DSL doesn't tie up your phone line, enjoy the convenience of not having to log off.

Reliability: BellSouth is a reliable broadband provider and the company that you can count on to keep you connected.

Convenience: BellSouth keeps it simple—from easy installation and setup to a single bill for your Internet and phone charges.

Customer Care: BellSouth—nationally recognized for Internet service reliability and customer care—has a knowledgeable, friendly tech-support group available to assist you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Just how fast is FastAccess DSL?

Here's an example of a 3.8 MB digital photo after 20 seconds:

28.8K modem	56K modem	FastAccess® DSL
2%	4%	100%

*FastAccess DSL completes the 3.8MB file download as fast as **20 seconds.** Download times with a 56K and 28.8K modem are so slow, it's staggering: more than **9 and 17 minutes** respectively.*

Order today and get a FREE month.*

Plus, get Norton™ Personal Firewall software— ***FREE*** *when you sign up online.†*

A one-time $50 service activation fee applies. DSL modem required for service.

Promotional modem charges are $125 for ethernet modem or $75 for basic modem. Customers who cancel or fail to activate service within 60 days of modem ship date must return modem or additional modem charges of $75 will apply. Customers may avoid modem charges by supplying their own DSL modem. Customers choosing to supply their own modem are not eligible to receive a modem under this promotional offering. BellSouth® FastAccess® Internet Service is not available in all areas and prequalification does not guarantee service availability at installation location. Pricing plans include BellSouth charges and the Global Service Provider's (GSP) charges for connection to the global Internet. GSP service is provided to users by provider(s) unaffiliated with BellSouth and subject to the GSP's terms and conditions. Standard installation fees are waived for customers who meet wiring and PC requirements and install service themselves (otherwise professional installation fees of $199.95 will apply). New residential customers only. BellSouth reserves the right to discontinue this promotion at any time. Other restrictions apply. See www.fastaccess.com for details.

*The third full month is free; the first two full months and partial month (if any) will be billed at the normal monthly rate.

**Download speeds may vary.

***Price for BellSouth Solutions℠ plan customers is $45.00. Customers must have BellSouth® Complete Choice® plan or BellSouth® Area Plus® service billed to the same line as FastAccess Service to qualify for BellSouth Solutions plan. Monthly price without BellSouth Solutions plan is $49.95. Prices subject to change.

†Available for online purchases only. After successful installation, customer will receive an e-mail at their bellsouth.net e-mail address with instructions on how to download the software.

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CONSULTING WITH A TREE DOCTOR

OLD WAY

1 Our Italian cypress trees were still losing needles on one side—more than a year after I wrote an unresolved Old Way/Net Way about them. Decided to try again. Through a friend of a friend, I contacted another tree doctor, Len Nelson, whose company, **Deblen Environmental Co. [eartheartplus.com]**, markets a wide variety of all-natural tree and garden products. He asked me to send photographs, needles, and sandwich bags filled with dirt from the trees' base. I sent everything to Nelson in Minnesota.

2 Nelson found a fungus. He happened to be visiting a relative in our area and made a house call, during which he applied an insect spray, plant food, and antifungal formula.

3 Three months later there are signs that the trees are healing. I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

TIME ELAPSED: N/A

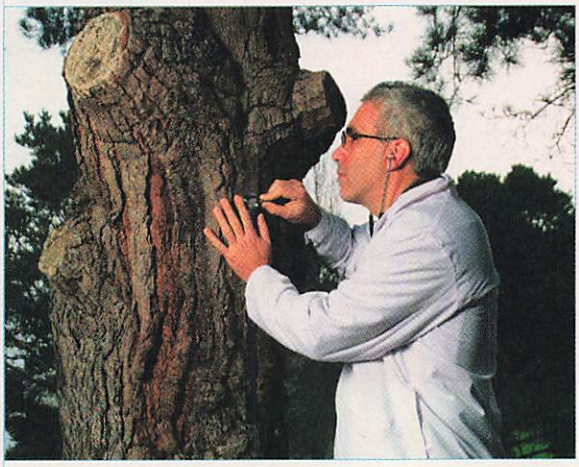
COMMENTS Apparently most Italian cypress experts are in Italy, so we were very fortunate to find Nelson.

NET WAY

1 While awaiting the tree doctor's help, I looked to the Net's myriad sites about trees. While there were some devoted to elms and chestnuts, I couldn't find a site about cypresses. Sites such as **Tips 4 Trees [oregonlink.com/treecare]** were too general for our problem. And gardening sites such as **GardenWeb [gardenweb.com]** and **TreeHelp.com** had valuable information but nothing to diagnose or treat our specific situation.

TIME ELAPSED N/A

COMMENTS Sometimes you need a hands-on approach.



WINNER: OLD WAY **After a visit from a skilled tree doctor, the trees seem to be improving.**

USING FREQUENT-FLIER MILES

OLD WAY

1 Planning a quick trip to Hartford from San Francisco, I called United Airlines, where my frequent-flier miles were gathering dust. I was told that most flights were available for 25,000 miles in coach or 40,000 miles in business class.

2 Once I'd firmed up my dates, I called back and asked the reservation agent to hold a seat. However, I didn't actually book the ticket, hoping for a better deal on the Net.

TIME ELAPSED 14 minutes

COMMENTS United (like other airlines) has cut back on its service to many cities, but I had no trouble finding flights.

NET WAY

1 Checked for promotions at **United [ual.com]**. There were none for my dates of travel. Booked my flight online anyway.

2 After several days, my plans changed. When I went back online, I found that it was impossible to switch a reservation.

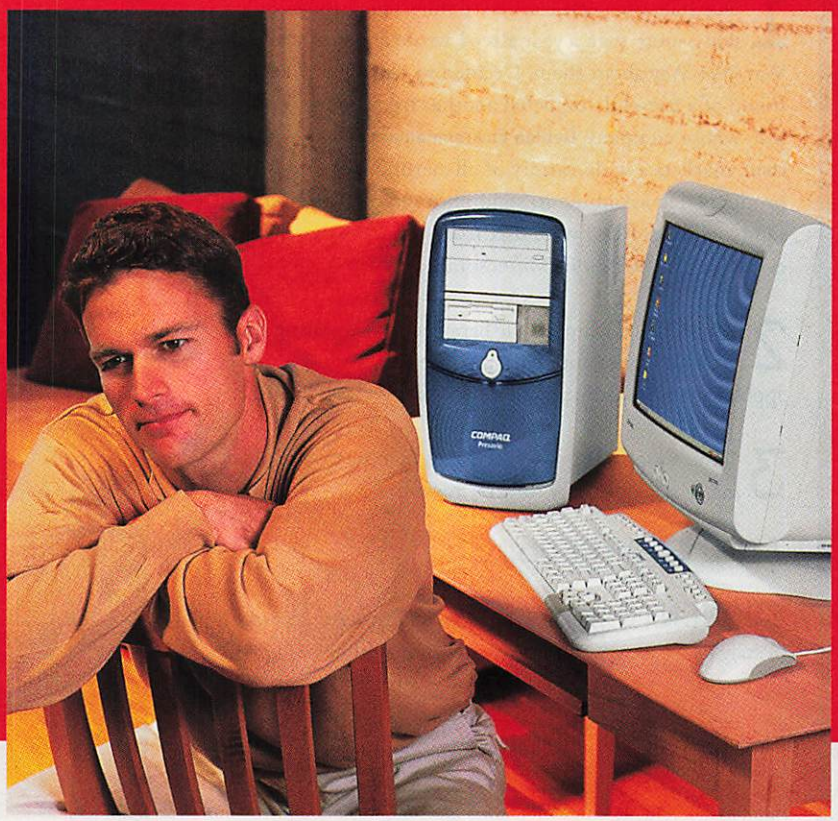
3 Called United and was informed that there was a $100 charge to change my flights. However, the agent took pity on me and waived the fee. That could never happen online.

TIME ELAPSED 40 minutes

COMMENTS The rep on the phone was extremely kind.

WINNER: OLD WAY **Human beings are still far more flexible than machines.**

WELCOME
TO YOUR



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COMPAQ
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Compaq PCs use genuine Microsoft® Windows®
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[1]All prices shown are Compaq Direct selling prices and do not include applicable sales tax and shipping, are valid in the U.S. only, and are subject to change or cancellation without notice. Illustrations may not accurately represent exact configurations priced. Retail prices may vary. Compaq is not liable for editorial, pictorial, or typographical errors in this advertisement. [2]Financing on approved credit by arrangement with Compaq Financial Services through MBNA America Bank, N.A. Payment based on a 48-month term at 14.99% APR. Your APR may be higher. There is no fee on Compaq purchases billed directly to your account. However, there is an access check fee of 3% of the U.S. dollar amount of each advance check ($5 min./$30 max.). [3]For hard drives, GB=billion bytes. [4]16X DVD-ROM drives read a minimum of 5545 Kbps and a maximum of 21640 Kbps. [5]24X CD-RW drive data transfer rates may vary as follows: for recording to CD-R media, the max transfer rate may be up to 3600 Kbps (use 24X discs for best performance); for writing to CD-RW media, the max transfer rate may be up to 1500 Kbps (use 4–10X high-speed media discs for best performance); for reading CD media, the max transfer rate may be up to 6000 Kbps. Actual transfer rates may vary depending on media quality. [6]ITU V.90 modems are designed only to allow faster downloads from K56flex- or V.90-compliant digital sources. Maximum achievable download transmission rates are currently unknown, may not reach 56 Kbps, and will vary with line conditions. [7]Six Months of AOL Internet Access included offer valid on the purchase of a Compaq Presario 5000T and 8000T PC between 10/15/01 through 05/01/02 direct from

Digital Pro

Presario 8000T-2.2

$1999‡

As low as $56 per month†

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.20 GHz
Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
512 MB PC2100 DDR SyncDRAM
80.0 GB (7200 rpm) UltraDMA Hard Drive[1]
16X DVD-ROM Drive[2]
24X CD-RW Drive[3]
56K ITU V.90 Modem[4]
Integrated 10/100 Network Interface Card
Sound Blaster™ Live! Value 5.1
JBL Platinum Speakers with Digital Audio Port
64 MB DDR nVidia GeForce3 Titanium 200 with TV-Out
Compaq CV735 17" Monitor (16.0" VIA)
Six Months of AOL Internet Access Included[5]

Personalize by choosing:

Gold Starter Kit: Add $80
Compaq CV935 19" Monitor (18.0" VIA): Add $140

Power User

Presario 8000T-1.8

$1499‡

As low as $42 per month†

Intel Pentium 4 Processor 1.80 GHz
Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition
256 MB PC2100 DDR SyncDRAM
40.0 GB (7200 rpm) UltraDMA Hard Drive[1]
16X DVD-ROM Drive[2]
24X CD-RW Drive[3]
56K ITU V.90 Modem[4]
Integrated 10/100 Network Interface Card
Soundmax II Digital Audio
JBL Platinum Speakers with Digital Audio Port
64 MB SDR nVidia GeForce2 MX200 with TV-Out
Compaq CV735 17" Monitor (16.0" VIA)
Six Months of AOL Internet Access Included[5]

Personalize by choosing:

Silver Starter Kit: Add $50
512 MB SyncDRAM: Add $100

Family Champion

Presario 5000T-1.7

$1099‡

As low as $31 per month†

Intel Pentium 4 Processor 1.70 GHz
Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition
256 MB PC2100 DDR SyncDRAM
40.0 GB (5400 rpm) UltraDMA Hard Drive[1]
48X Max CD-ROM Drive[6]
24X CD-RW Drive[3]
56K ITU V.90 Modem[4]
Integrated 10/100 Network Interface Card
Soundmax II Digital Audio
JBL Platinum Speakers with Digital Audio Port
32 MB nVidia M64 Pro
Compaq CV535 15" Monitor (13.8" VIA)
Six Months of AOL Internet Access Included[5]

Personalize by choosing:

Bronze Starter Kit: Add $30
Microsoft Windows XP Pro: Add $99

Whiz Kid

Presario 5000T-1.6

$899‡

As low as $26 per month†

Intel Pentium 4 Processor 1.60 GHz
Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition
256 MB PC2100 DDR SyncDRAM
20.0 GB (5400 rpm) UltraDMA Hard Drive[1]
48X Max CD-ROM Drive[6]
56K ITU V.90 Modem[4]
Integrated 10/100 Network Interface Card
Soundmax II Digital Audio
JBL Platinum Speakers with Digital Audio Port
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Compaq CV535 15" Monitor (13.8" VIA)
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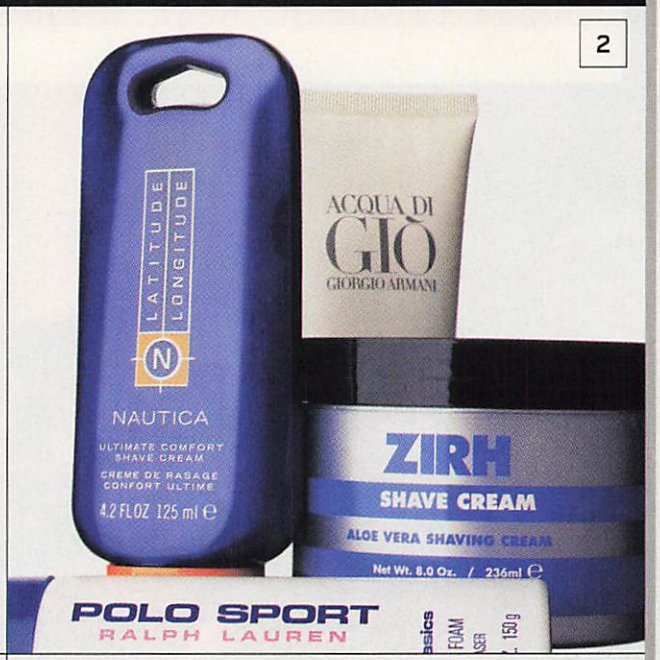
Compaq or through Compaq "Built For You" kiosks available at certain Compaq retailers. **To avoid being charged a monthly AOL fee, simply cancel before six-month promotional offer ends**. Premium services carry surcharges, and communication surcharges may apply in certain areas, including in AK, even during promotional period. Members may incur telephone charges on their phone bill, depending on their location and calling plan, even during promotional period. Acceptance of the applicable AOL Internet Access agreement is required. Please see agreement for details at AOL keyword: TOS. Available to new members in the U.S., age 18 or older, and a major credit card or checking account is required. [6]48X Max CD-ROM data transfer rates may vary from 2500 to 7200 Kbps. Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition Installed. Compaq, the Compaq Logo, Inspiration Technology, and Presario are trademarks of Compaq Information Technologies Group, L.P. in the U.S. and other countries. Intel, the Intel Inside Logo, and Pentium are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the U.S. and other countries. Microsoft, MS, and Windows are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. America Online and AOL are registered service marks of America Online, Inc. Products and company names mentioned herein may be trademarks and/or registered trademarks of other companies. ©2002 Compaq Information Technologies Group, L.P. 1322/03/02

Top of the Morning

Upgrade the medicine cabinet with these worthy toiletries. Clockwise from top left: Michael eau de toilette by Michael Kors, $60, **eLuxury [eluxury.com]**; Garren New York Holding & Molding gel, $20, **Garren New York [garrennewyork.com]**; Santa Maria Novella shave cream, $38, **Lafco [lafcony.com]**; Chanel Allure Homme eau de toilette, $52.50, **Gloss.com**; Calvin Klein Eternity for Men aftershave, $34, **Macys.com**; Latitude Longitude soap by Nautica, $10, **Macys.com**; Neutrogena transparent facial bar, $2.50, **Drugstore.com**. MEAGHAN O'NEILL

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVIES+STARR

CABINET AND CLOCK COURTESY OF MOSSONLINE.COM



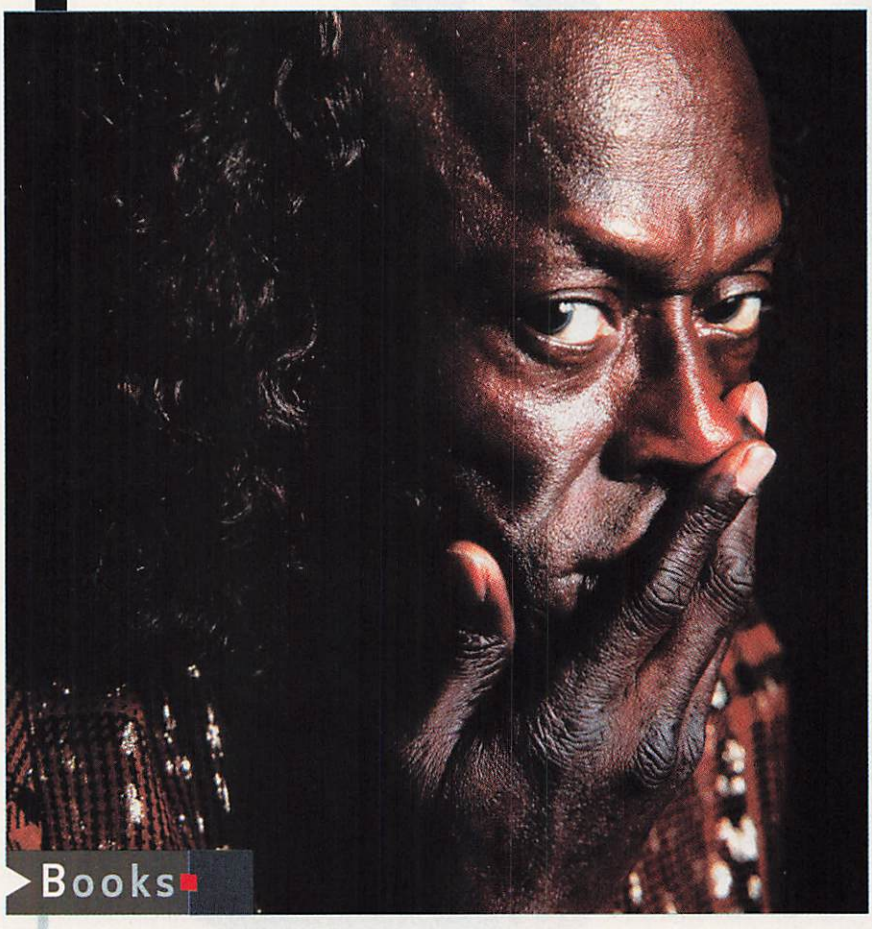
About Face

1 » BRUSH STROKES e Shave brushes, $45–$55, **Sephora.com**. **2 » LATHER UP** Polo Sport, $12.50, **Polo.com**; Latitude Longitude Ultimate Shave Crème from Nautica, $12, and Acqua di Gio by Giorgio Armani, $15, **Macys.com**; Zirh, $18.50, **Zirh [zirh.com]**. **3 » CLOSE CALLS** Mach3 Turbo razor, $9, **Gillette [gillette.com]**; Microscreen 3 TCT electric shaver, $118, **Remington [remington-products.com]**; InterFace, $50, **Braun [braun.com]**. **4 » AFTER THE FACT** Clinique Happy for Men aftershave, $31, **Gloss.com**; Fahrenheit by Christian Dior, $38.50, **eLuxury [eluxury.com]**; T by Tommy Hilfiger, $38, **Tommy.com**.

DAVIES+STARR

Content

what to watch, hear, read, and play online



Books

WINNERS? PLEASE?

An award for e-books goes to hard-copy titles. Give us a break

WHAT DISTINGUISHES THE RECIPIENTS OF THE SECOND ANNUAL FRANKFURT E-BOOK AWARDS, announced last October by the International eBook Award Foundation? The two grand prizes, amounting to $50,000 each, were given to *The Glass Palace* by Amitav Ghosh (Random House) for fiction and to *Crypto: How the Code Rebels Beat the Government* by Steven Levy (Penguin Putnam) for nonfiction. The two $10,000 Distinguished eBook Awards went to the short-story collection *Faithless: Tales of Transgression* by Joyce Carol Oates (PerfectBound) for fiction and to *The Making of Kind of Blue: Miles Davis and His Masterpiece* by Eric Nisenson (St. Martin's Press) for nonfiction.

CHECK IT OUT GO TO YIL.COM/CRITICS FOR MORE INFO

Each of these is a worthwhile title, but something is rotten here. All

Book Shorts

***COWS*, RONALD SUKENICK**

A New York professor arrives in Colorado to help a philosophizing cowboy investigate the murders of his cattle. From there, this wacky tale hopscotches from spy thriller to science fiction to social critique. Drawing heavily from noir and raiding contemporary culture to the tune of JonBenét Ramsey and nuclear radiation, the packed narrative whips by so fast it leaves characters—and readers—reeling. Though style occasionally trumps substance, Sukenick's book is one original and very trippy ride. **N.M.** ★★★ **[altx.com/ebooks/cows.html] (Free)**

Music Shorts

DOROTHY AND RICHARD BERRY, "THE WORLD NEEDS PEACE" Written by former Raelette Dorothy Berry after a troubling Middle East tour in the '80s, this defiantly festive antiwar oddity—sung with her ex, Richard Berry (scribe of "Louie Louie")—was revived online as a response to recent world events. A rolling rhythm, ratcheting guitars, and exhilarating horn blasts combine with Dorothy's soulful wail and Richard's royal croon to create a lost R&B classic—with a special bonus message about the only thing worth fighting for. **A.M.** ★★★★ **[louielouie.net]**

THE ELECTRIC SOFT PARADE, "THERE'S A SILENCE" It's the music video that set a Guinness World Record, shot in Windows XP's Movie Maker one morning and Webcast globally early that afternoon. Appropriately for the historic occasion, the

MON **THE VIRTUAL OFFICE**, 9:30 P.M. SET UP IN CYBERSPACE **[TALKCITY.COM/BIZCITY/BCC-CS.SHTML]**

TUE **GEOGRAPHY CHAT**, 9 P.M. WHERE IT'S AT **[GEOGRAPHY.ABOUT.COM/MPCHAT.HTM]**

WED **DAVID ALDRIDGE ON THE NBA**, 1 P.M. NOTHIN' BUT NET **[ESPN.GO.COM/COMMUNITY/CHAT]**

MILES DAVIS: LUCIANO VITI/RETNA UK

the winners are hard-copy books that merely happened to have been published simultaneously in electronic form. The only book awarded for its formal distinctiveness as an e-book, *Intrigues* by François Taillandier (Les Éditions oohoo), was praised for its interactivity, but its special citation involved no cash. Basically, the judges seem to be saying that a good e-book is good whether it's an e-book or not.

So far, what has mainly proved special about exclusively digital e-books is that their publishers have judged them not worth publishing in any other form. The notable exception, of course, was Stephen King's experiment, *Riding the Bullet*, whose success depended on recognition of its author's name.

We hope e-books will someday be judged for their positive criteria: not only for their uniqueness thanks to hypertext and its myriad possibilities, but also for the speed with which a writing project can be made available to the public. It may be true that few real e-books exist yet, but let us praise the idea of them anyway—in anticipation of the inevitable day when actual ones will be born. **CHRISTOPHER LEHMANN-HAUPT**

Music

SMELLS LIKE STREAMED SPIRIT

Online Music Award winner Spirit Creek flows on

COULD THE NET-AS-SAVIOR-OF-THE-LITTLE-GUY CLICHÉ ACTUALLY BE COMING TRUE? A TENACIOUS Net-head following helped put Spirit Creek over the top in *Y-Life*'s own Online Music Awards last September, in the Best Unsigned Artist category. And the passions of Spirit Creek's refreshingly uncompromised power pop are clear on the band's new EP, *Call the Rain*, available on its Web site. Within its post-grunge parameters the band finds an array of varied melodic structures—from funky jangle to heavy balladry—with a vocal approach that ranges from death-metal growl to an almost country quaver. As crunchin' as Creed (and way less self-important), Spirit Creek is an online favorite composed of five decidedly ready-for-real-time players. **Spirit Creek [spiritcreek.net]** **ADAM McGOVERN**

band plays Beatles-like on a rooftop, with passersby lip-synching below. As befits the group's cyberpopulism, the sound is endearingly electro-garage: infectious yet unpretentious post-Britpop (that's *British* pop, not *Britneyish* pop) that signals a landmark in good taste as well as high tech. **A.M.** ★★★½ **[www.softparade.co.uk/esp.html]**

Game Shorts

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 This critically acclaimed skateboarding sequel also happens to be the first Net-ready PlayStation 2 title. Simply connect a USB Ethernet adapter to play against online opponents. Skate as the legendary Tony Hawk, as another well-known skater, or as a custom thrasher you create. The goal is to pull tricks and tough combo moves in locations including skate parks in the U.S., Canada, and Tokyo. **M.S.** ★★★★ **[activisiono2.com/tony_hawk] ($49.99)**

INCRIMINATI We've all had that tense teenage moment: The folks come home earlier than expected, and you've got seconds to hide the contraband before they barge into the room. Relive the memories with this online game in which players drag and drop vodka bottles, condoms, handcuffs, and a blitzed friend into clever hiding places before the door swings open. **M.S.** ★★★ **[seethru.co.uk/games/incriminati] (Free)**

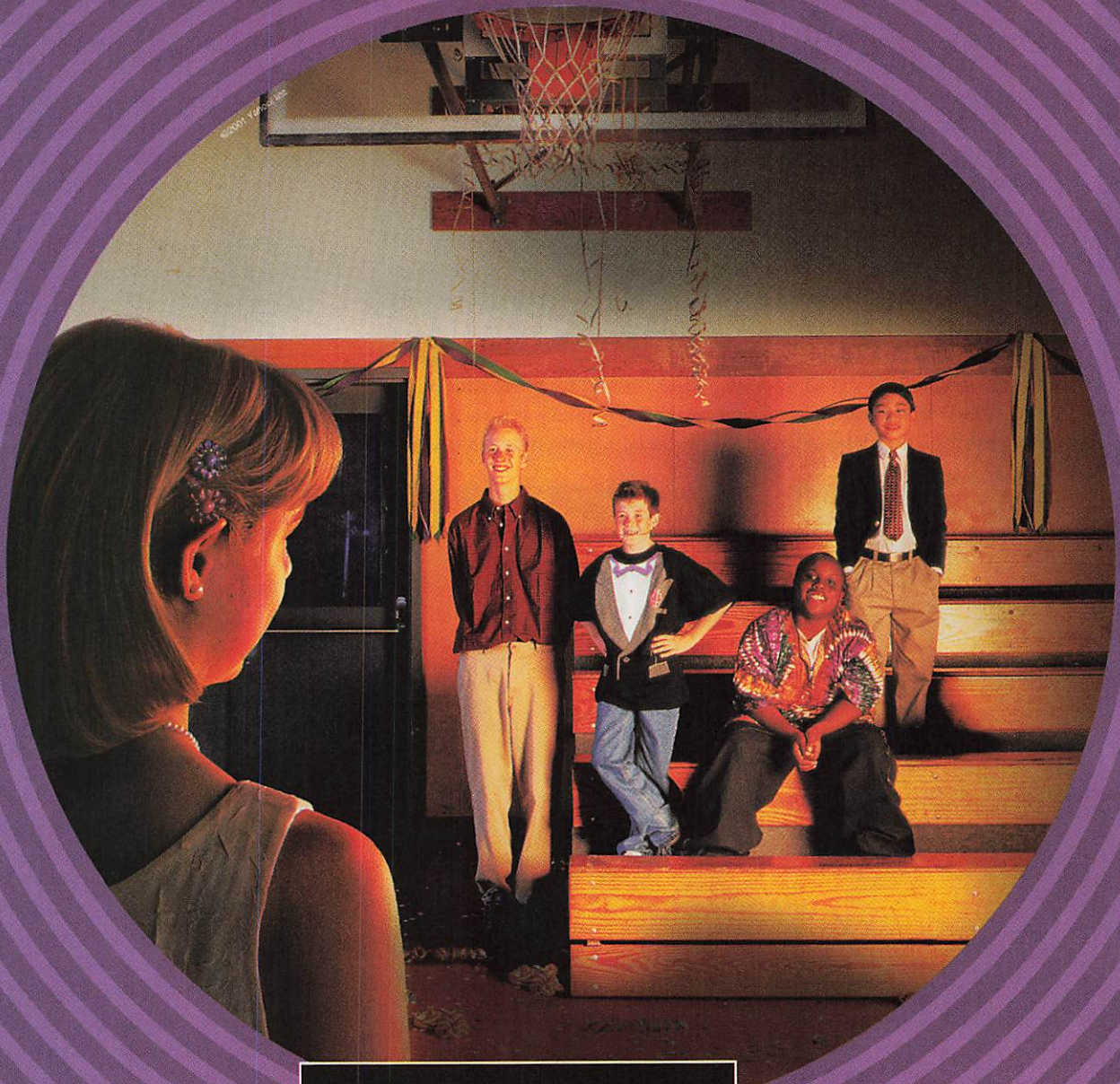
SPIRIT CREEK: KYLE KUMMER; INCRIMINATI: SEETHRU.CO.UK

THE CONTENT COMMITTEE: ADAM McGOVERN, NAN MOONEY, MARC SALTZMAN

THU **JOBS CONFERENCE**, 11:30 P.M. A CAREER TO LOVE **[TALKCITY.COM/BIZCITY/BCC-CS.SHTML]**

FRI **THE A-LIST WITH ANTHONY DECURTIS**, 2 P.M. ROCK TALK **[GETMUSIC.COM/SHOWS/ALIST]**

SAT **DECORATING STUDIO CHAT**, 7 P.M. IMPROVING INTERIORS **[DECORATINGSTUDIO.COM/CHAT_ROOM.HTM]**



Always comparison shop.

Need to pick up a few things? Hit Yahoo! Shopping. Search Shopping, Auctions, Classifieds and Warehouse all at the same time. It's a regular shopping buffet. shopping.yahoo.com

powered by COMPAQ

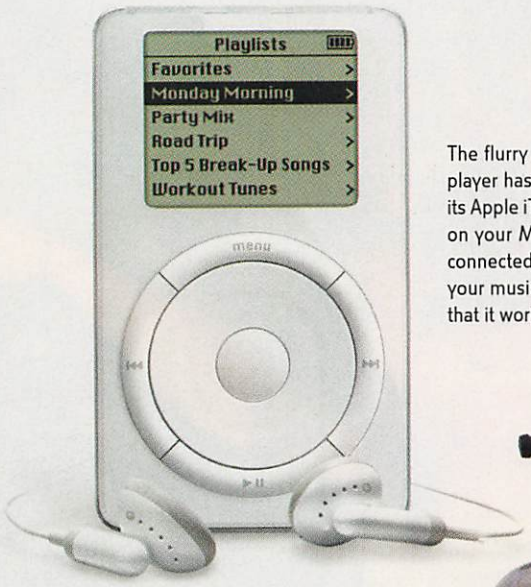
YAHOO! Shopping

Do You YAHOO!?

cool tools

ultimate accessories for the digital life

by don willmott



1,000 SONGS TO GO

The flurry of excitement about **Apple's iPod** is justified. The 6.5-ounce MP3 player has a 5GB drive (that's enough space for 80-plus hours of music), and its Apple iTunes 2 software synchronizes with the digital music you've collected on your Mac. The iPod has a 10-hour battery life and recharges itself while connected to your Mac. And the navigational wheel that guides you through your music is a stroke of genius. The worst thing to be said about the iPod is that it works only with Macs—at least for now. **$399 [apple.com/ipod]**

VICTORY OVER VCR

Just like earlier ReplayTV or TiVo models, the **ReplayTV 4000** records hours and hours of shows to its hard drive, lets you pause live TV, and allows you to pick and choose from its on-screen program guide. But this baby's broadband connection makes last year's models look Paleolithic. Share recorded shows among several ReplayTVs on a home network, send your favorite *Seinfeld* episode to a friend who also has a ReplayTV 4000, and download shows from the Net. **$699 to $1,999 [replaytv.com]**

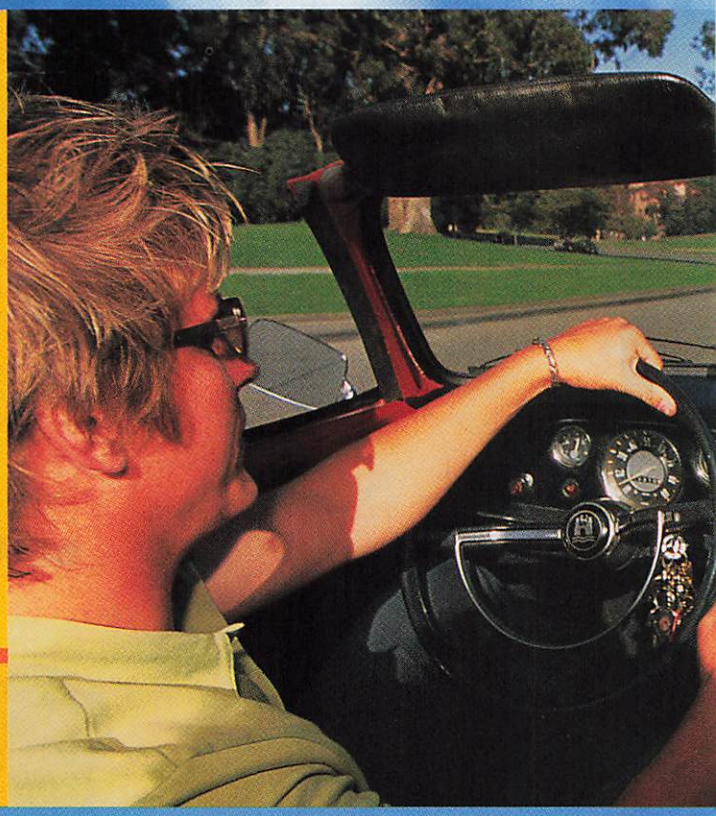
BEACH BLANKET TURBO

Summer can't be too far off if the latest personal watercraft are starting to roar onto the scene. The three-person **Yamaha WaveRunner FX140** has a four-cylinder, 140-horsepower motor that's powerful enough to tow a water-skier or wakeboarder. It runs 86 percent cleaner than conventional two-stroke engines (surpassing all federal emissions standards), letting you jump the waves and be environmentally friendly at the same time. **$9,499 [www.yamaha-motor.com]**

Push record. Push send.

Push your expectations.

yes you can.



You can experience digital video in a whole new way. Introducing Microsoft® Windows® XP, the software that lets you get more out of digital video than you ever dreamed. Just plug your video camera into your PC, then capture, edit, and add your own music, narration, and effects. Then post your movie to the Web, or e-mail it to share with family and friends. All easily, the very first time. Take what you thought your PC could do, and throw it to the wind. With Windows XP, you can.
www.microsoft.com/windowsxp

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Windows xp

AN AIBO WITH ATTITUDE

The **Sony Aibo ERS-220** has a *Terminator* look and brains to match. More than a toy, the latest iteration of the synthetic dog can be custom-configured to patrol your house and send back streaming video images via a wireless network, shoot digital photos (triggered by a motion detector), and move in ways that you choreograph and recall with a voice command. New software lets Aibo either learn by experience or emerge from the box behaving like a mature canine. You can even change the sound of Aibo's footsteps (try Boost mode to give prowlers a good scare). **$1,500 [www.us.aibo.com]**

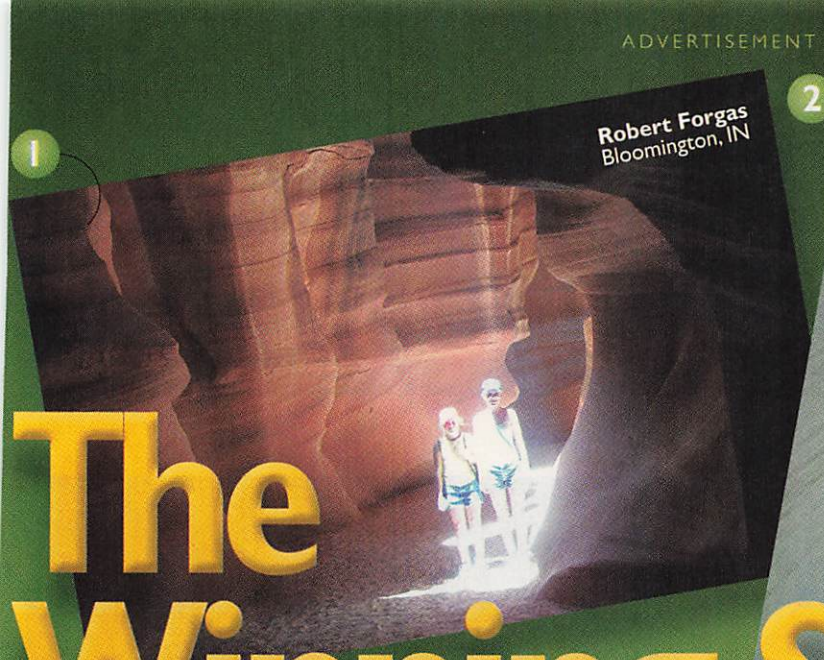
DIG THIS FOSSIL

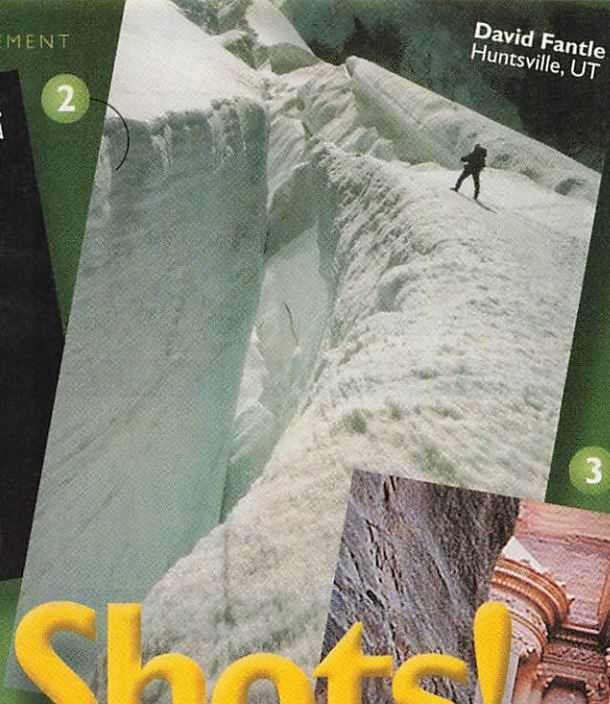
PDAs were invented so you wouldn't have to lug a computer around simply to check your address book or schedule. The **Fossil Wrist PDA** was invented so you won't even have to lug your PDA. Use a Palm or Pocket PC–based organizer to beam the latest data to the watch via infrared, and you're good to go. Take a mix of contacts, appointments (with daily, weekly, and even teeny tiny monthly views), to-do list items, and memos wherever you go. **$145 [fossil.com/pda]**

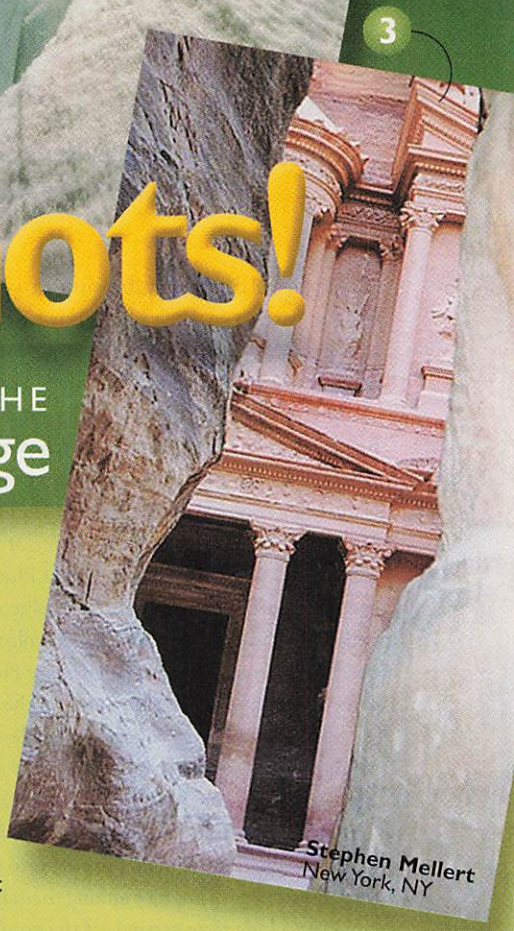
ALL-AROUND FLAT

The relatively high price of a flat-panel display seems more reasonable if you can use the screen for more than just your computer. The sleek, 17-inch **Samsung 171MP monitor** has an optional high-definition TV tuner that lets you use it as a television. Keep an eye on CNBC while doing your day's work with the Picture in Picture feature. A 170-degree viewing angle means the image doesn't fade when you view it from the side. **$1,399 [samsungusa.com/monitor]**

ADVERTISEMENT







The Winning Shots!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF THE Minolta Photo Travel Challenge

We asked our readers to send us their best family, adventure and world travel photos. We would like to thank all of you who submitted photos, we received an overwhelming response. It was a challenge to select just three. Congratulations to our winners: Robert Forgas of Bloomington, IN, David Fantle of Huntsville, UT, and Stephen Mellert of New York, NY. Here's what their photos won for them:

1. **FAMILY TRAVEL PRIZE**
   Beaches Turks & Caicos Resort & Spa, the Caribbean's #1 Ultra All-Inclusive Resort
2. **ADVENTURE TRAVEL PRIZE**
   An escape to Baja California with Mountain Travel•Sobek, the Adventure Company
3. **WORLD TRAVEL PRIZE**
   A Visit to the Cultural Splendors of Belgium: Brussels and Bruges

---

Winning Photos from the Incomparable Minolta DiMAGE 7

The Minolta DiMAGE 7

Taking great pictures and sharing them over the Internet is easier than ever with the Minolta DiMAGE 7, the award-winning camera that sets new standards in the anytime, anywhere magic of digital photography.

Only Minolta, the worldwide leader in imaging technologies, could have developed this innovative new camera. The revolutionary DiMAGE 7 combines the high quality performance of traditional photography with the immediacy and speed of digital technology. And all at a very affordable price.

MINOLTA

The essentials of imaging

find it

DISCOVER THE MANY VIRTUES OF CREATING A WIRELESS NETWORK ON THE FLY

It's easy to feel daunted by the world of wireless networking. Even without wires, it's a tangle. And just when you think you've worked up the courage to set up an 802.11b (Wi-Fi) network at home, along comes a new buzzword—Bluetooth—to confuse the issue.

Bluetooth? Yep. Originally developed as a way for wireless headsets to communicate with telephones, this radio-based protocol has a range of about 30 feet. Any Bluetooth-enabled gadget in a room can automatically find and communicate with any other nearby Bluetooth device at up to 1Mbps. Bring a Bluetooth laptop into a room with a Bluetooth printer, and you can print without any cables. Put a Bluetooth camera in a room with a Bluetooth PC, and you can download your photos, no wires needed. If all members of a meeting are Bluetooth-equipped, they can effortlessly pass data files around the conference room.

Sounds like a good solution for a wireless network, right? Wrong. With its relatively short range and slow speed, Bluetooth is not and was never meant to be a way to build a wireless office or home network. Those transfer data 10 times as fast and over far greater distances. Bluetooth's main purpose is to eliminate cables and let portable devices move files among them more easily.

After a long time getting off the ground, Bluetooth is finally emerging as a standard feature in some peripherals, such as the $400 HP DeskJet 995c printer, and as an option on some notebook PCs, such as Toshiba's Portégé 4000 and Tecra 9000. For about $150, several companies (for example, **3Com [3com.com]**) make antenna-equipped Bluetooth adapters for notebook and desktop PCs, in USB or PC Card formats. Palm is designing a Bluetooth case into which you can snap a Palm Vx for printing directly from the Palm. Add a Bluetooth cell phone to the mix, and syncing contacts among PC, Palm, and phone will be as easy as walking into a room and hitting one button. Having the blues isn't nearly as sad as it used to be.

quick tips

SPACE ACE

Surfers who download too many MP3 files or game demos are familiar with the message "Hard disk is low on space." When this warning pops up, turn to **UltraSoft: Space Odyssey [www.ultrasoft.ro/page_so.htm]**, a free utility that helps clear up room on bloated PCs. The software hunts down and eliminates useless programs that Windows' Add/Remove function may have missed and suggests files that can be deleted or compressed without harming other programs.

THE "FILE" FILE

Most people know the difference between an *.mp3* and a *.jpg* file, but what about a *.bit* or a *.zap* file? Fortunately, all of the mysteries of file extensions are answered at the comprehensive **Whatis.com: Every File Format in the World [whatis.techtarget.com/fileFormatA]**.

IT'S A STRETCH

Feeling cramped? Need a little breathing room in your browser? Give Microsoft Explorer extra screen space by hitting the F11 key. To return the browser back to its normal size, simply hit the F11 key again, or click the restore icon in the browser's upper right-hand corner.

RON KRISEL/GETTY IMAGES

FUNKY FONTS AND TALKING E-MAIL: ADD SOME LIFE TO YOUR ONLINE CORRESPONDENCE

FANCY TALK Electronic messages get a voice with Talking E-mail and Spotlife (far right).

.01 send video mail

Video messaging, long a staple of sci-fi cinema, is now available here on earth, and almost anyone with a Web cam and a microphone can use it. **AT&T WorldNet Service [www.att.net]**, for example, provides video e-mail to subscribers, letting surfers record and send up to 300 minutes of video e-mail per month. **Yahoo! Mail [mail.yahoo.com]** has also added video mail. Access the free feature by opening a new composition window, scrolling to the bottom of the page, and clicking the Video: Add link to launch the recording applet. Recipients access your creation by clicking on a link embedded in your e-mail. You're allowed to have thirty 30-second clips "active" at any time, and everyone must have Windows 98SE, ME, or 2000, along with Internet Explorer 5.01 or Netscape Navigator 4.7 or later (except 6). Need more space to express yourself? Go to **SpotLife [spotlife.com]**, the site that powers Yahoo!'s video mail. It offers video storage space, live video capability, and more, for anywhere between $2.99 and $99.99 per month, depending on your needs. Do-it-yourselfer PC users should check out **Digital Media Works: VideoMail Studio [videomailstudio.com]**, a free program that uses a PC's video capture card to create video messages, which are then sent as attachments (in AVI format) to recipients. VideoMail Studio is compatible with systems running Windows 95, 98, NT, or 2000.

.02 touch up your mail

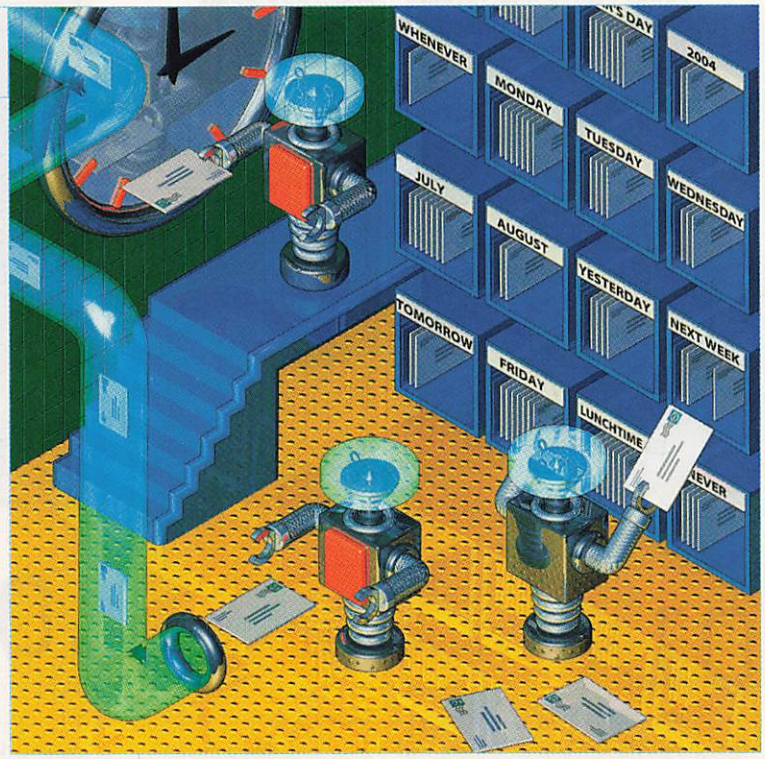
It's easy for irony, sarcasm, and jokiness to get lost in e-mail because electronic messages lack a tone of voice. Address that problem with **IncrediMail [incredimail.com]**, an e-mail program that lets you add 3-D effects, backgrounds, and even voice recording to messages. Recipients don't need special software to view your IncrediMail messages, but some e-mail clients don't work with the program. (AOL users can view IncrediMail e-mails only as attachments, for example.) The ad-supported software is free, but if you want to create personalized, reusable stationery for your e-mail, you'll need to shell out $39.95 for the Letter Creator software. IncrediMail works with systems running Windows 95, 98, NT, 2000, or XP and Internet Explorer 4.*x* or later.

.03 make your in-box talk

Okay, so there's no pressing reason to download **4Developers: Talking E-mail [4dev.com/talkmail]**, but it sure is cool. When new e-mail arrives in your in-box, the PC-only software launches cartoon character pop-ups (such as an animated wizard) that read your messages aloud. The program works with most POP3 e-mail accounts, including Yahoo! Mail. Talking E-mail is free to try for 14 days and costs $19.95 to register. **ROB BERNSTEIN**

webuser surf guru

SCHEDULE YOUR E-MAIL DELIVERIES; POWER SEARCH WITH GOOGLE



Q» Is there a way to delay the delivery of e-mail in Outlook Express?

A» Yes, and a handy thing it is, too. I've automated it to send out birthday greetings to all of my family members because I never remember to send cards. (It may not be sentimental, but it keeps me out of hot water.) Just write your e-mail normally. Then, before you send it, click the Options button in the composition window, or go to View: Options. This will launch the Message Options window, where you can instruct Outlook Express to deliver your message hours, days, or even years later. Simply check the "Do not deliver before" box and select a future delivery time. Those of you who don't use an e-mail service or program with this feature should click over to **EmailAlibi.com**. The site lets surfers send time-delayed messages via the Web using their regular e-mail address as the return address.

Q» I think Google is the best search engine, but it sometimes returns way too many results. Do you have any tricks for honing queries?

A» Check out Google's expert search features, which can be accessed by clicking the Advanced Search link beside the query field. Here, surfers can focus queries by domain and date of publication and can hunt down sites written in any of 27 languages. Even better are Google's advanced operators, which are commands that modify your searches. For instance, when you type *filetype: pdf* at the end of a query, the site will return listings only of Adobe Acrobat (*.pdf*) files. A complete list of advanced operators, with explanations, can be found at **Google: Advanced Search Operators [google.com/help/operators.html]**.

Q» I'm researching medical information, and I don't know whether a site is current. How can I find out when the page was last updated?

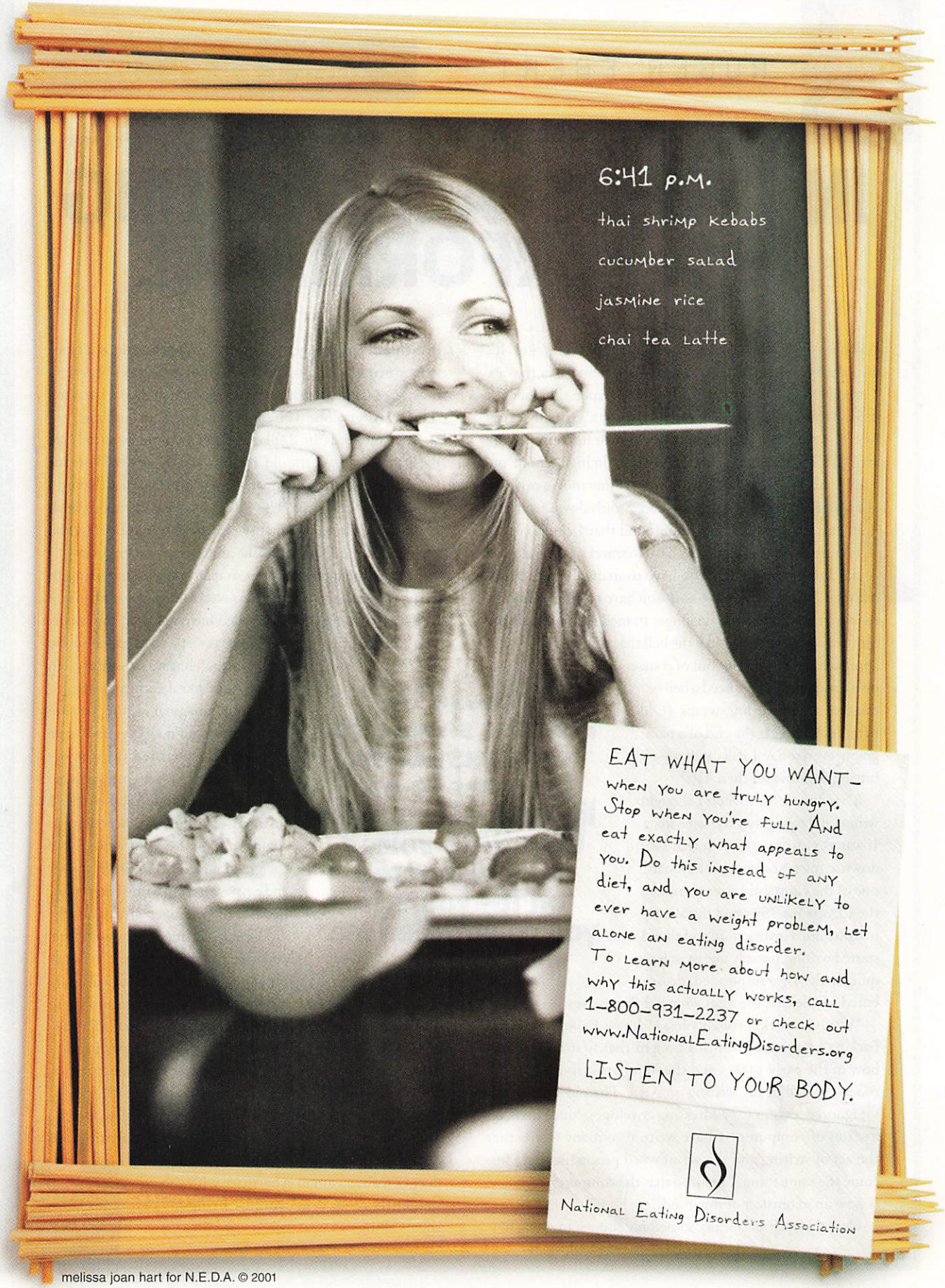
A» If you use Internet Explorer, go to the site in question and type the following command into the Address field: javascript:alert(document.lastModified). Hit Enter. A tiny window will pop up and show you the last time the page was modified. In Netscape Navigator 6.1, you can gather information about a Web page by typing [Ctrl + I]; however, in my experience, the browser's "Last Modified" information is totally unreliable. And, of course, just because a site has been updated doesn't mean it's accurate. I recommend sticking with reliable health sites such as **WebMD [webmd.com]**.

EDDIE BOWEN/WWW.COSMO7.COM

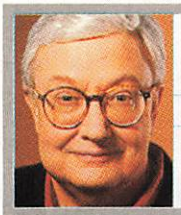
aol watch

Because you suspect your child is chatting with strangers online. Because you believe your spouse may have a virtual love. Because you're just really nosy. All are good reasons to download and install Blackbox for AOL from **Cablehead Software [cablehead.com]**, a "stealth monitoring" application that records AOL, AIM, ICQ, and Yahoo! Messenger chats. The PC-only program can also be used to capture e-mail correspondence and sniff out a user's trail of sites viewed. The software editions are available for AOL versions 4, 5, 6, and 7. Blackbox is free to try for 10 boots and costs between $23 and $39.95 to buy, depending on the version.

MORE GURU FOR DAILY TIPS AND ADVICE, SURF OVER TO YIL.COM/GURU



melissa joan hart for N.E.D.A. © 2001



IN CYBERSPACE, WRITING IS A PERFORMANCE

A shelf in my office displays my L.C. Smith typewriter. It's an old machine, the kind you see in 1930s newspaper movies. I used it when I edited my college newspaper, then bought it for $10 and took it with me. Until 1977, virtually every word I wrote was typed on that machine or its cousins—the articles I did for science fiction fanzines in high school, my early sports stories, the first 10 years of my movie reviews. A few moments ago I took the L.C. Smith down from the shelf and tried to type on it, and found that I could not.

It's just so klutzy. My fingers have to travel so far and work so hard to depress a key. You have to manually return the carriage at the end of every line. You have to hit the Tab key to indent. My fingers are no longer trained to hold down the Shift key. I do, however, like the bell that rings to tell me I'm approaching the margin. But of course on a computer I don't need a bell because of automatic line-wraps. (Old habits die hard: At the end of a paragraph, even today, I still catch myself hitting Return and then Tab.)

There was a time when I thought writing and typing were the same thing. It was 25 years ago this year that I sat down at my first computer keyboard, one of the clunky old Atex terminals the *Chicago Sun-Times* had installed. I had an hour's instruction, and then I started writing, initially uneasy at how quickly the keys responded, disoriented a little that the lines wrapped themselves.

Within a week, probably less, I knew I could never go back to a typewriter. Until I bought that first DEC Rainbow in the early 1980s, and the Tandy 100 to take on the road, I did all of my writing on Atex. The old L.C. Smith sat ignored, except for addressing envelopes. Since then, on a series of computers, I have written so many words that the act of writing and the act of word processing have become the same thing. I realized that the computer keyboard is now an extension of my mind.

Over that quarter century, something else—something fundamental—has changed about my writing. Sitting at a typewriter (in my high school bedroom, my college fraternity room, my rented Chicago apartment), I was acutely alone. I was the solitary writer, alone with my thoughts and my machine.

Now my words are displayed on a computer monitor. Not the little monitor of the old Tandy or the all-text XyWrite interface of the Rainbow, but an Apple Video Display that is 19 inches from side to side. This is the same monitor upon which I surf the Web, read and answer e-mail, watch DVDs, and keep my daily calendar. It is the arena of my cyberworld.

Because the monitor serves so many purposes, it seems to me like a public space. Countless voices have appeared on it—including yours, if you've e-mailed me. Typing on this monitor is subtly different from typing on a piece of paper on the L.C. Smith. That was a solitary act. This is more like a performance.

Because the monitor serves so many purposes, it seems to me like a public space. Countless voices have appeared on it—yours, if you've e-mailed me

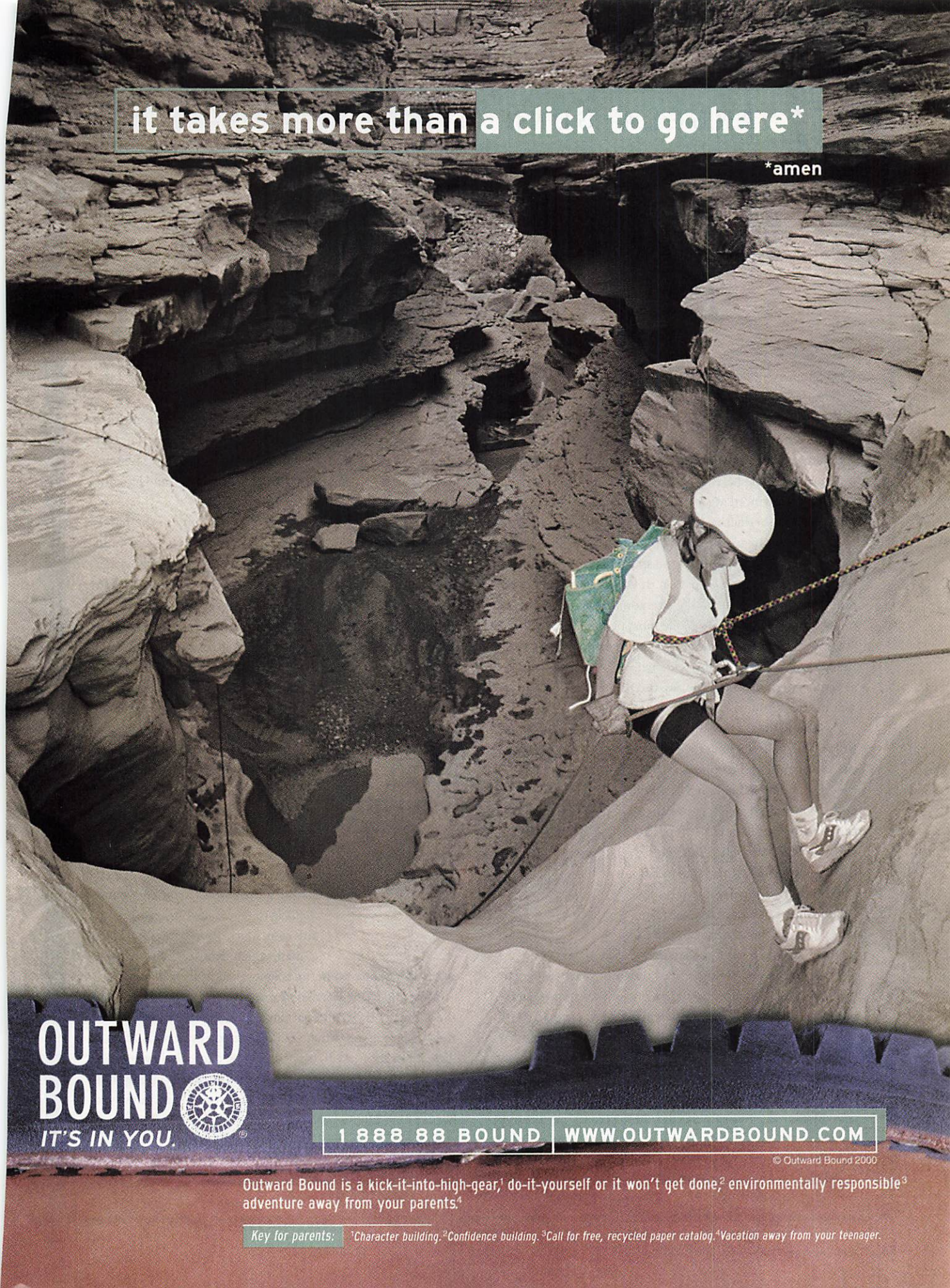
In some imaginary sense, you are reading this right now, even as I write it. I have keyboarded in so many e-mails, so many forum messages, so many arguments and replies, that I instinctively think of this activity as a conversation. I do not write it and then send it forth, as I did with paper and a typewriter. To write it on a monitor is somehow to create it publicly.

Does this change the way I write, and affect my writer's voice? Possibly. It may make me less formal, more conversational. I may anticipate your objections and try to answer them, instead of remaining in magisterial solitude.

In a closet I have piles of yellowing newspaper pages—tear sheets of hundreds or thousands of *Sun-Times* articles. At some point (I didn't even notice at the time) I stopped saving them. I no longer needed the tear sheets, because I had the digital files. Because this was not a conscious decision, it must have been a reflection of a deeper reality. I am in cyberspace with you permanently now. Why would I bring my tear sheets along? ■

CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION ONLINE AT YIL.COM/EBERT

PAUL ELLEDGE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ANGELA GUNN

HOW TO GET HIT ON BUT NOT KISSED

Q: My friend sent me a link from **Ananova [ananova.com/news/story/sm_468085.html?menu=1** about clicking on the Web site of some German guy named Kai to get his hit count up. Apparently, if he gets 111,111,111 hits, then his friend Julia will sleep with him. My friend told me to do it, but should I? What does this guy's social life have to do with me, ethically speaking?

A: I'm not convinced at press time that this site isn't a hoax, but no matter—ethicists deal in hypotheticals all the time.

Speaking in hypotheticals (because we're a respectable magazine and we're not going to speculate on the sex lives of teenagers), this is a situation in which by other people doing something on behalf of person A, person B will be obliged to do something. While most normal folks call this "voting," according to Kai, Julia, and supporters of their strange little sex comedy, this is known as "courtship." And people say the Net destroys your social life.

Assuming there's no other barrier to Kai and Julia sleeping together—they're not related to one another, they're not married to other people, and so on—there's no reason they can't make a bet like this. I hope, by the way, that Miss Julia didn't think that imposing this 111,111,111 mandate was an effective not-if-you-were-the-last-man-on-earth blowoff. Even from here I can see that Kai is the kind of young man who loves a challenge.

I hope that Miss Julia didn't think that a 111,111,111 click mandate was an effective not-if-you-were-the-last-man-on-earth blowoff

Prurient interest aside—and who knows, maybe someone will manage to actually put it aside one of these days—you're not pushing an unwilling damsel into a fate worse than death here. She made the bet freely, and by being one among so many clicks, you're doing something with less ethical ignominy attached to it than, say, a celebrity endorsing a product he's never used in his life. By *not* clicking, you're tacitly acknowledging that this is an entirely silly site and, quite possibly, yet another poorly executed Web hoax (for more on Net scams, see page 74). Works for me; if Kai wants my vote, Julia isn't the only female he's going to have to charm.

Q: I have been Secretly Kissed! What is this, and how do I respond? What if it's someone I don't like?

A: Sites such as this one that purport to hook up mutual crushes may look innocuous, but they're a bad idea. Though they seem to offer an embarrassment-free form of matchmaking, they can make for awkward situations—and let's not forget the high potential for abuse.

The sites work like this: One person puts in the name and e-mail address of that special someone she's crushing on. The crushee gets an e-mail notification, along with a link to the site. Once at the site, the admired one is asked to speculate on who the smitten party might be. If the recipient guesses right, romance blooms. If the recipient guesses wrong, the sender simply doesn't hear back.

Sounds harmless, but imagine your busybody friend (yes, you've got one) trying to get two uninterested folk interested in one another by telling each that the other is interested. Imagine this person doing so to cause mischief. Imagine getting a note from "Mark" when the name of your boss is Mark—sexual harassment at worst, workplace weirdness at best. Now imagine going on a fishing expedition at the site, listing all the Marks you know and waiting to see which one answers. In this case, Mark-your-boss gets a kissy e-mail, which exposes *you* to harassment allegations. Sometimes ignorance really is bliss.

Most important, you don't know what else they're doing with the addresses they collect at these sites, so you may be unwittingly exposing your would-be honey to spam as a result of your little infatuation. AOL users should be particularly wary, as a recently uncovered scam requests that the kissee give up not only his e-mail address but also his password to find out who's hot for him. On the whole, these sites are less like Troo Luuv and more like a particularly disastrous blind date. ■

Right? Wrong? Write: angela_gunn@ziffdavis.com

JAY GULLIXSON

ROBERT SCHEER

HALLELUJAH! MICROSOFT SEES THE LIGHT

For now, the pendulum has swung back toward online privacy, and not a moment too soon. Bill Gates has made a decision that could be as momentous as the one he made six years ago, when he ordered everyone in the company to change direction at once to focus on the Internet. This time he's concerned with one of the most important consequences of that six-year-old decision: your security and privacy. In a long overdue move, Gates boldly shut down all Microsoft software development in February while his 7,000 systems programmers underwent security sensitivity training. Furthermore, his programmers were told "not to write any new line of code until they have thought out the security implications."

Readers of this column know that I am hardly credulous when it comes to the computer industry's promises to police itself on matters of consumer privacy. But that memo from Gates to nearly 50,000 Microsoft employees was disarming. It argues compellingly that without stringent privacy protection, the Internet as a commercial entity will wither on the vine.

The Gates endorsement of what he brands "trustworthy computing" means that he recognizes that the operating system of the Internet is a public utility whose reliability and security should be guaranteed, something we consumers can take for granted. As Gates put it in his e-mail: "Trustworthy Computing is computing that is as available, reliable, and secure as electricity, water services, and telephony."

Necessity being the mother of invention, Gates has been forced to recognize that computer security is the primary requirement for his vision of a fully Net-integrated company. As he noted in January's memo, "Over the last year, it has become clear that ensuring .NET as a platform for trustworthy computing is more important than any other part of our work. If we don't do this, people simply won't be willing—or able—to take advantage of the other great work we do."

Last year saw a frightening increase in the number of computer invasions—more than twice as many as in the previous year—including the Code Red and Nimda worms, which infested Microsoft products and cost consumers billions of dollars. Dramatic proof that the problem was getting worse came with the now-infamous security hole in Microsoft's brave new Windows XP operating system; that one was bad enough to earn it a warning from the FBI. And its Passport technology, designed to hold our most vital data (to allow for easy Internet cruising and commerce), was found to have a flaw permitting hackers to rob Passport's credit card numbers and other data.

Gates has been forced to recognize that computer security is the primary requirement for his vision of a fully Net-integrated company

Of course, concern for the user is not the only reason for these virtuous actions. For the first time there is a real prospect of legislation holding the computer industry open to the same sort of product liability lawsuits that have forced others, such as automobile manufacturers, to shape up. People who had suffered adverse consequences because their data had been stolen or destroyed might be able to sue software suppliers whose designs, either by carelessness, haste, or commercial expediency, had left the door open to intruders.

But Gates is also acknowledging that the real cost of irresponsible security practices is a loss of consumer confidence—one that is too high a price for his company to pay. Microsoft, in its eagerness to sell us ever-newer tools and toys, has long been remiss in protecting us. But if Gates really forces his company to focus on a new goal, as he has successfully done in the past, there is hope that will now change.

"Users should be in control of how their data is used," Gates wrote, or "the dreams about e-business that have been hyped over the last few years" will never become a reality. For Microsoft, what's at stake is more than "dreams" about e-commerce; it's the company's very dominance of the marketplace. That's why I think we can trust Bill on this one. ■

Aseem Batra [aseembatra@hotmail.com] contributed to this column.

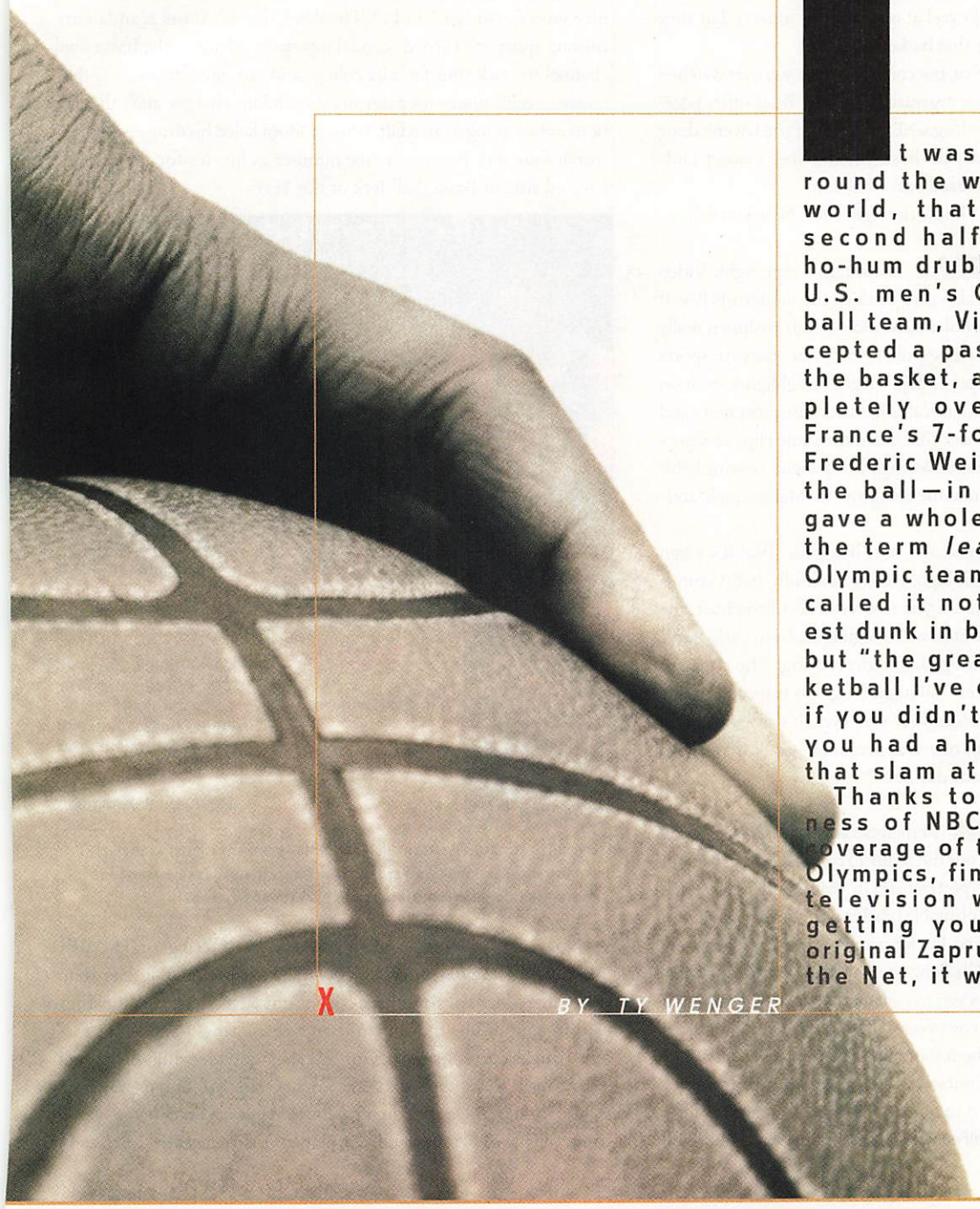
BLAKE LITTLE

HOBBS

WIRED

JOHN HUET

For real fans, there ain't nothing like the Net. How did basketball become the most wired game in town? Click by click



It was the slam heard round the world—the wired world, that is. During the second half of yet another ho-hum drubbing by the 2000 U.S. men's Olympic basketball team, Vince Carter intercepted a pass, raced toward the basket, and hurdled completely over the head of France's 7-foot-2-inch center Frederic Weis before dunking the ball—in the process, he gave a whole new meaning to the term *leapfrog.* Carter's Olympic teammate Jason Kidd called it not just the greatest dunk in basketball history, but "the greatest play in basketball I've ever seen." Still, if you didn't have a browser, you had a hard time seeing that slam at all.

Thanks to the sheer madness of NBC's tape-delayed coverage of the 2000 Summer Olympics, finding that play on television was harder than getting your hands on the original Zapruder tapes. But on the Net, it was ubiquitous. A

BY TY WENGER

night game in Sydney is a morning game in the U.S., so in offices throughout America, T-1 lines were glutted with replays of Carter's brazen dunk. And on that day, the Internet arguably eclipsed television as the medium of choice for obsessive hoops fans.

Since then, basketball and the Net have become as inseparable as Phil Jackson and the triangle offense. And with good reason. "Basketball is a unique blend of a visual sport and a stat-driven sport, and that makes for a compelling online experience," says Brenda Spoonemore, vice president of Internet services for NBA Entertainment. Case in point: **NBA.com** delivered nearly 3 million video streams to its more than 26 million visitors in November 2001 alone—a 400 percent increase from the previous year, and a clear sign that frame rates have finally caught up with basketball's frenetic pace.

"Between highlights, photos, fantasy leagues, and real-time scores, the NBA's got a mixture of everything," Spoonemore says. "Some of the other major sports [sites] excel at one of those aspects, but they don't have the whole package that basketball does."

Granted, she's paid to say that, but consider: Have you ever watched a baseball highlight online? Ever organized a College Bowl office pool? Ever played in a fantasy hockey league? Exactly. But if you haven't done the basketball equivalent of any of those, you're either a closet Luddite or you're not a properly crazed basketball fan.

Or perhaps you just didn't know the right sites. Now you will.

GO TO THE VIDEOTAPE

The Buggles were right: Video did kill the radio star—but it also gave birth to the modern NBA. If not for highlights of tomahawk slams, would African bushmen really be wearing Michael Jordan jerseys? Still, if you're an obsessive sports freak, you may have sensed a bit of déjà vu; game highlights, even on different networks, are often identical. That's because most news and sports shows use satellite services that beam the same clips to shows around the world. So your compulsive nightly highlight-viewing habit means you suffer the same mundane Stockton-to-Malone pick-and-roll again and again and again.

Is this a sign to flee the house and start living life? No! It's a sign that you need better basketball highlights. Thankfully, NBA.com is here for you. With unrestricted rights to every NBA broadcast, the site offers five minutes of narrated video highlights from each game, more than 10 times your average highlight serving. The clips are even updated every 30 minutes—all night long—so you can literally watch the highlights unfurl before your very eyes. It's an embarrassment of basketball riches, and one that presumably will have those bushmen getting broadband any day now.

START THE MADNESS

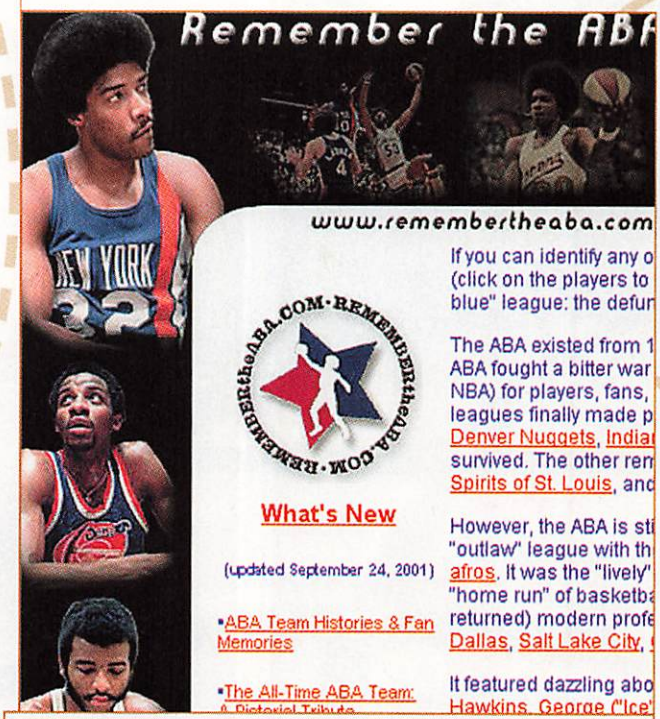
Remember back when the chief skill for organizing an NCAA pool was the ability to construct a tournament bracket using graph paper and a protractor? Uh, yeah, neither do we. Today, dozens of sites offer basic printable brackets, and several allow you to organize your entire pool online. But for our money, you can't go wrong with the ESPN Tournament Challenge page at **MSN: ESPN [espn.com]**. Its free, simple interface allows you to construct your pool in minutes, ensuring that in no time your coworkers will see you as a skillful social leader—or the guy harassing them for their $10 entry fee.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Before you put your money where your mouse is, you need to take the Internet's greatest college basketball crash course at **FinalFour.net**. (Don't even pretend like you know the difference between the starting backcourts of Xavier and Iona.) Download its constantly updating and eerily hypnotic 64-team desktop bracket, offering interactive rosters, pregame matchups, team/player stat comparisons, television schedules, TotalCast replays, and game summaries, breakdowns, and logs. If that's not enough for you, head directly to **FansOnly [fansonly.com]**, the most solid year-round purveyor of college hoops minutiae.

TRACK THE PERSONAL FOULS

If you think half the fun of sports comes from watching overpaid, overindulgent physical freaks wreak havoc on our communities and flaunt our nation's laws and values, *then basketball is your game!* And no medium delivers that kind of tawdry sensationalism with the speed and vitality of the Internet.

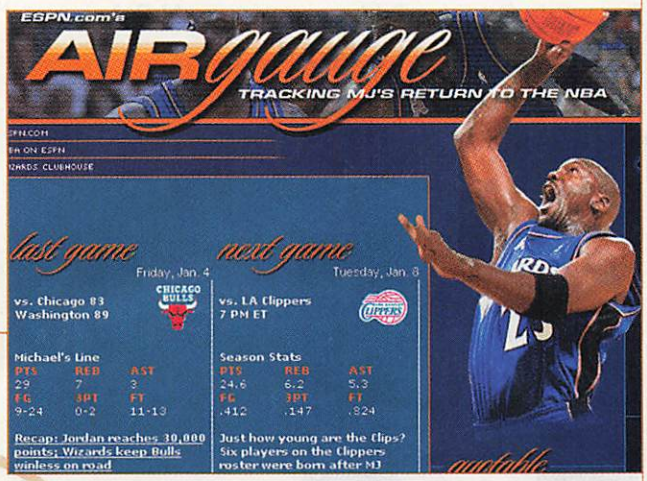
Start your scofflaw search with **JerkOfTheWeek.com**, the site "where nice guys finish last." JerkOfTheWeek doesn't think scandals are ruining sport; it's turned scandal *into* sport. Head to the basketball channel to track your favorite college and pro ne'er-do-wells as they receive weekly points for paternity suits, felony charges, and other actions unbecoming to an adult. Lamar Odom failed his drug test? That's worth four Jerk Points—a nice number as he vies for the not-so-coveted title of Basketball Jerk of the Year.



RELIVE THE PAST AT REMEMBER THE ABA [REMEMBERTHEABA.COM] (ABOVE), OR TRACK MICHAEL JORDAN'S RETURN TO THE NBA AT MSN: ESPN'S AIRGAUGE [SPORTS.ESPN.GO.COM/NBA/AIRGAUGE/INDEX] (OPPOSITE PAGE)

Not as nasty as you wanna be? Peruse the offerings at The Way We Hear It from **Basketball News [basketballnews.com]**. Juicier than the sanitized fare of your more corporate sports sites, "the way they hear it" sounds like they heard it on a chain gang. Read about former Knicks coach Jeff Van Gundy repeatedly deriding his team's lack of "balls"—a sound bite that somehow failed to find its way onto that night's *SportsCenter*. Then try **RealGM [realgm.com]**, where you'll come for the delicious details of players' salaries, team salary caps,

and transactions, but you'll stay (and stay) for the snarky reporting and edgy insights of the Furballs and Pump Fakes sections. Finally, cruise your patrol car to the **InsideHoops.com** Daily NBA Rumors page for dozens more scandals, gleaned from the dirtiest tidbits found in local daily sports sections around the country. But whatever you do, just keep repeating this to yourself: These are athletes—not role models.



BREATHE HIS AIRNESS Asking if Michael Jordan is bigger than the game of basketball is like asking if Paul McCartney is bigger than Wings. Given Jordan's popularity, it's surprising that there isn't an entire cable network devoted to airing His Airness. But we *do* have not one, but two online destinations devoted to providing far more than the recommended daily dose of Michael. **MSN: ESPN.com's AirGauge [sports.espn.go.com/nba/airgauge.index]** and the Tracking Jordan page on **SportingNews.com** offer much of the same: Michael's schedule, his performance, his stats, his record, his trivia, his quotes, his biorhythms, and his bowel movements. (Okay, we lied about those last two.) The AirGauge's weekly Job Approval Rating and a chart comparing MJ with the NBA's young guns in every crucial stat (including endorsements) make Jordan idolatry so much fun, you might actually forgive the man for risking his legacy out of sheer boredom. But if you truly want to be like Mike—or learn how Mike can be like Mike again—head to the collection of Jordan's basketball instructional videos found at **Yahoo! Sports: NBA [sports.yahoo.com/nba/news/yhoo/mvpindex.html]**. There, you'll receive tutelage from MJ on everything from the crossover dribble to how to jump higher. And that windmill-360-tomahawk jam? You'll have to figure that out for yourself.

HEAR THE BALL, BE THE BALL With all these video highlights available, why settle for audio broadcasts of basketball games? Because basketball plays far better on the radio than any other sport, save possibly for golf. (Seriously. Don't knock **PGA Tour Radio [pgatourradio.com]** until you've tried it.) With an **NBA.com: Audio League Pass [nba.broadcast.com/audiolp]** membership, you can hear every "For three...*yes!*" from every pro game. A word to the wise: At this point in the season, you're probably best off with a $9.95 monthly membership (as opposed to the $29.95 season pass).

After the game, head to the audio channel at **CBS SportsLine.com [sportsline.com]** for postgame locker-room clichés from your favorite stars. The ability to search by last name means you can listen to each and every one of Stephon Marbury's whining, self-righteous diatribes. When you've finally tired of such things, SportingNews.com's Exclusive Audio clips offer lengthy and—dare we say—occasionally insightful interviews with the likes of Allen Iverson, Steve Smith, Tyson Chandler, and Antoine Walker.

BE DICK VITALE Okay, so all these audio offerings are nice, but admit it: You know you could do better. Heck, if Bill Walton is qualified to broadcast basketball games, so are you.

The services of **FanCast [fancast.com]** will put you in the broadcast booth. Register at FanCast, and with at least a 56K modem and a microphone hookup you, too, can experience the thrill of being Marv Albert (minus the garter belt). Sign up for free and you'll score two free FanPasses, each good for four hours of airtime on the site. Alert your friends and family, then deliver play-by-play broadcasts of your favorite hoops, or just blow hot air like Charles Barkley. Once you're hooked on the sound of your voice, prepare to fork over $2.50–$5 per broadcast—or $39.95 for a month of unlimited yammering.

GROW YOUR 'FRO Does your idea of "basketball history" consist of grainy images of Bob Cousy, in tight little shorts, dribbling around the court with one hand? Then it's time to save your rubber soul at **Remember the ABA [remembertheaba.com]**. Devoted to preserving the history of the American Basketball Association—that funkadelic, upstart league of the '60s and '70s—the site is a must for those not fortunate enough to have witnessed the league's high-flying hoops and even higher Afros. (Given that the ABA received virtually no television coverage during its decade of existence, that's just about everyone.)

Peruse the candidates for Biggest Hair in Basketball History. Get your polyester fix at the site's Freewheeling Fashion gallery. Learn where to buy your very own red, white, and blue basketball. Then download the sound clips of such ABA stars as Dr. J, George "The Iceman" Gervin, Moses Malone, and Connie Hawkins—and be thankful the Internet exists to replay the sound of the league that fell like a tree in the woods.

RETREAT INTO YOUR LITTLE FANTASY WORLD When an online search for "fantasy basketball" yields 15 times as many matches as "naked Pamela Anderson," it's clear that fantasy hoops has achieved online cottage-industry status. But its popularity is also its rub—with 59,500 Web matches on Google alone, how are you to know which fantasy is your fantasy?

The offerings at ESPN, SportsLine, **CNN Sports Illustrated [cnnsi.com]**, SportingNews, and Yahoo! Sports serve up roughly the same packages of stats, news, and scouting reports. But given that most leagues are already well under way, your choice is clear: **The SportingNews: Fantasy Games [fantasygames.sportingnews.com]**. While other leagues require complicated drafts, league selections, and entry fees, at the SportingNews you're automatically assigned to a league of 20 folks who are as late to the party as you are. Within five minutes, you'll be scouting the league, drafting your starting five, and dealing players like Mark Cuban on a Snapple buzz. Within two days, you'll be fully addicted and trolling the Web for basketball updates. Not that much different from what you're probably ready doing—only now, you'll have a reason.

Ty Wenger, whose last contribution to *Y-Life* was "Taxicab Confessions" (June '01), writes frequently about sports.

Basketball commissioner David Stern discusses NBA.com's great leap forward

DIGITAL DAVE'S GOT GAME

David Stern can't quite remember who first called him "Digital Dave." "I think it was [NBC Sports president] Dick Ebersol," the NBA commissioner recalls, laughing, "but now we've changed it to CyberDave." Yet by any name and any measure, Stern has led the National Basketball Association to its emergence as the world's most Internet-savvy professional sports league, and he is still as optimistic about the Web as ever.

And why shouldn't he be? With audio from every NBA game streamed live, a dazzling array of highlights available through the official **NBA.com** (which also has its own cable and satellite TV channel), and major new partnerships with RealNetworks, AOL, and Yahoo!, pro hoops has left the other leagues in the dust. The secret? Opportunism and a willingness to experiment.

"We'll try anything," Stern says. "We're in the process of doing it all, and we do it out of self-interest." Sooner or later, the commissioner knows, "something will work. But you never know what." Sitting down with *Y-Life* in his Manhattan offices, David Stern mused on the NBA's grand online experiment.

Y-LIFE The NBA was the first major pro sports league to truly embrace the Internet. Why was that?

STERN It was our old-fashioned way of thinking. For me, the Internet has always been a means of distribution. We understood early on that, however it evolved, more and more people were going to be involved in this medium. Everybody was saying, "Commerce, community, content." Content? I know *that.* Commerce? We're already in that business. Community? Is there any stronger-linked community than sports fans? If that's the selling proposition, that's us. The

PETER FREED/CORBIS OUTLINE

WIRED COMMISH: STERN AT THE NBA.COM HEADQUARTERS IN NY.

NBA's job has always been to move its product in front of its consumers. The predominant way to do that went from radio to over-the-air television—both local and national—to cable, to satellite, to digital cable. And interestingly, none of these ever dropped off. So, the Internet is just the latest means of getting our content out.

Y-LIFE Is there any tension between the means of distribution?

STERN There's always tension, because if someone is listening to a game on the radio, they're probably not watching it on television. If they're watching it on cable, they're probably not watching it over the air. Some people do watch the game on TV while they're online, but when you think of these tiers, it's like slicing the salami. How many times can you do it? There is a potential diminution across the board. But just as television wasn't the demise of radio, and just as VCRs have not brought the demise of TV, and just as TiVo has not brought the demise of prime-time TV, there will always be space.

Y-LIFE You got a lot of press when you Webcast a live Mavericks-Kings game. What did you learn from that experiment?

STERN First of all, that people from all over the world would actually tune in to a not-very-good-fidelity view of our game. And that as high-speed delivery increases, there will be increasing pressure for the delivery of more and different products via high-speed access.

Y-LIFE What about streaming more games?

STERN We still see interactive as an augmenting approach, until it becomes something more profound and lucrative, because of the degree of our television relationships. Right now we're using NBA.com more for the transmitting of information and highlights, archived materials, and statistics, but not game feeds in any substantial way.

Y-LIFE What about internationally? You've streamed NBA games in South Korea, through Sportslive.

STERN They were being streamed in sort of a "walled garden," so that they didn't get sent out to the immediate world. To the extent that the technology allows us to protect games in a given market, where people can't get enough NBA, then we might try that. South Korea is a place where we don't have a television deal because of the turmoil in their TV industry. Outside the U.S., broadcasters are much more sensitive about these issues than they are even here.

Y-LIFE Your approach to the Internet seems to be quite different from that of other industries, such as music.

STERN We put things on NBA.com that we choose to put on NBA.com. The music industry was afraid of someone violating its copyrights, and that's a position I agree with. When we put games over the air, somebody is paying us for those games.

Y-LIFE Do you look to any other industries as models?

STERN Not really. Remember, sports is a product that tends to lead industries because of the affinity that consumers have for it. So we're making our own judgments here. When you look at the opportunities that present themselves, they seem to have been created for us, whether it's fantasy games, video games, or streaming highlights at the quarter. But we do look at other companies—whether it's Amazon, or AOL, or [gaming company] Electronic Arts—to see the things that they've excelled at doing.

Y-LIFE So then what's the plan? What is the NBA going to be doing online two years, five years from now?

STERN That's the beauty of it: There is no plan. (Laughs) We're opportunistic when we see something that takes us a different way than we had initially expected. Maybe a very small number of people want to play video games on their telephone or keep track of how many points Allen Iverson is scoring. But let's try it. Because out of all of this is going to come something that will be a profitable application. And then, when something works, you try new things with it. If we put quarterly highlights out and millions of people tune in, then we think, okay, would anyone like to see enhanced quarterly highlights, maybe of a particular player, going to his left, on Tuesdays? We're in the process of doing it all, and we do it out of self-interest.

Y-LIFE Don't you worry that too many newfangled things might distract from the actual experience of the game?

STERN No because, at its basic level, the plan is to have the NBA, the WNBA, and the National Basketball Development League keep producing great content, both current and archival, which is priceless. The mode of expression is neutral. And I guess I do believe in the transformative fan experience. The numbers started to rise—suddenly, 26 million people were visiting our site, each for his or her own reason, and each for his or her own geography. It doesn't matter because our job has always been to be there. I think that any fan, anywhere in the world, should expect to be able to communicate with the NBA 24/7. You've got a question? We have an answer. If you purport to be global, you should be able to give your community the kind of service that implies. And I think we're not too far from that.

I think that any fan, anywhere in the world, should expect to be able to communicate with the NBA, 24/7. You've got a question? We have an answer

Y-LIFE Are you afraid of getting too far ahead?

STERN Yes. We want to be able to surf here, but not necessarily out in front and then under the waves. That's what burned some people. Another issue is investment. Yes, it's great that we're talking about capturing all the games, storing them, serving them in a secure way, and then charging for them. Tell me which companies have really stepped up to do that yet. We're very lucky in terms of the kind of people we've partnered up with: Paul Allen, Ted Leonsis, Mark Cuban, Comcast, AOL Time Warner.

Y-LIFE Along those lines, did the dot-com downturn affect your plans?

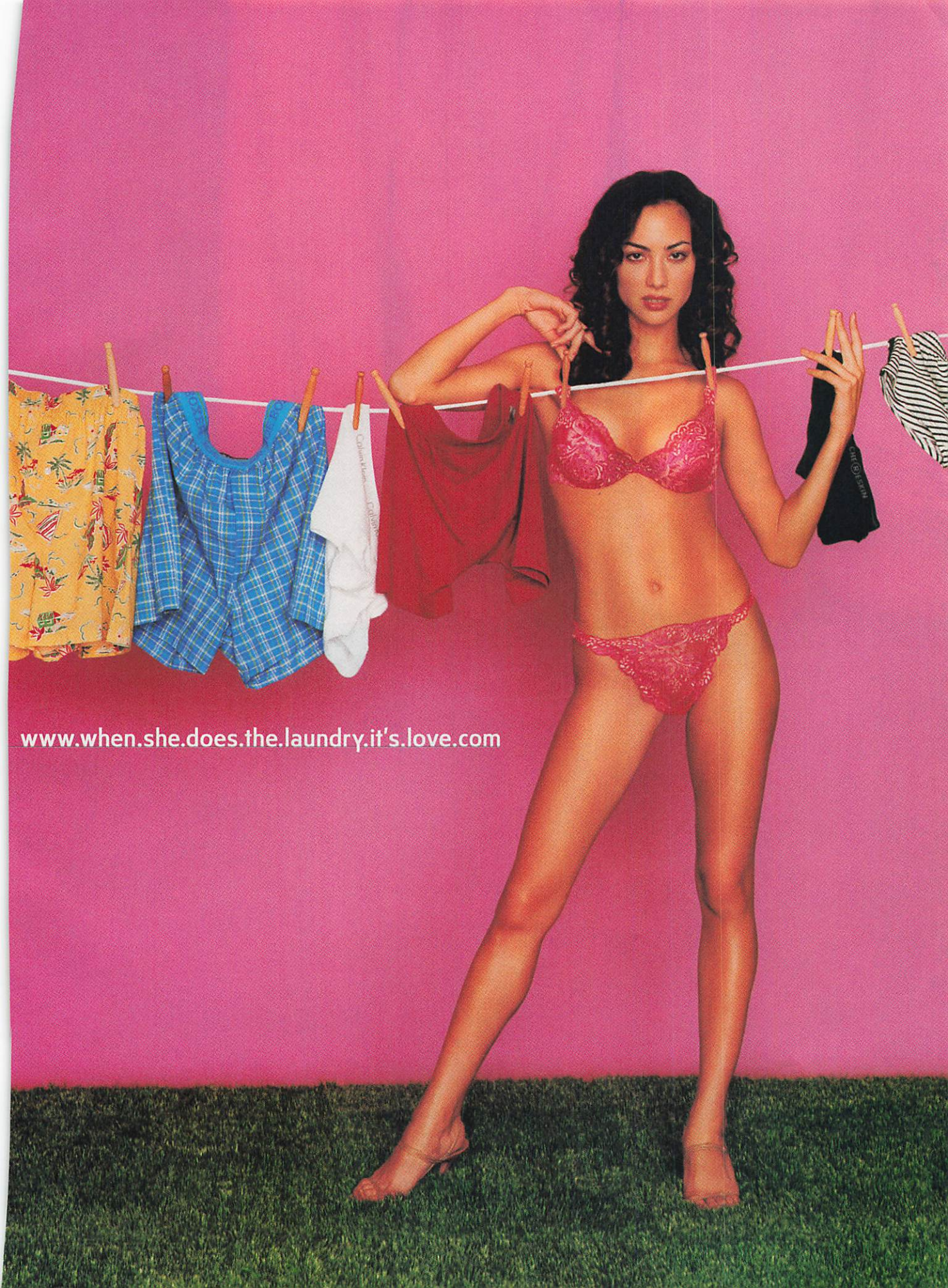
STERN It made us feel better about certain decisions. We made a fundamental decision, despite our own optimism, that we would invest slowly but continuously, and that we wouldn't treat any expression of our content as separate or apart from the NBA business. As we watch various companies either give away their Web sites or shut them down, we feel that we made the right decision. Remember, the number of people online isn't diminishing. The number of people becoming more savvy with the technology isn't diminishing. And all this growth is occurring internationally. So in terms of our universe, everything is bigger than it was before. ■

if web addresses came to life

or, thank heaven for literal URLs //PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEFAN NYVANG

LEFT TO RIGHT **Hartmann** mobile traveler, **Kenneth Cole** woven day case, **T. Anthony Ltd.** wardrobe trunk, **T. Anthony Ltd.** Barclay bag (rear), **Coach** travel satchel (front), **Hartmann** overnight garment sleeve, **Cole Haan** bowling bag, **Hartmann** woodbox pullman, **T. Anthony Ltd.** polo duffel. ON HIM **Nautica** suit, **Donna Karan** shirt, **Allen-Edmonds** footwear, **D&G** belt. (SEE PAGE 79 FOR DETAILS.)

ABOVE LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM **Swatch** Stalwart, **Gucci**, **Oris** Classic XXL, **Hamilton** Everest, **cK** Primary, **TAG Heuer** Monaco. ABOVE RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM **Seiko** Windward, **Nautica**, **Omega** Speedmaster, **Movado** Eliro, **Tommy Hilfiger**, **Breitling** Navitimer Cosmonaute. OPPOSITE, LEFT TO RIGHT (ON LINE) **2(x)ist**, **American Eagle Outfitters**, **Joe Boxer**, **Calvin Klein**, **Jockey**, **Ron Chereskin**, **BOSS Hugo Boss**. ON HER **Malizia** from **La Perla**, **Stuart Weitzman** footwear. (SEE PAGE 79 FOR DETAILS.)


www.when.she.does.the.laundry.it's.love.com

LEFT TO RIGHT **Banana Republic** trousers, **Rockport** footwear; **Hickey Freeman** trousers, **Johnston & Murphy** footwear; **Claiborne Menswear** trousers, **J.M. Weston** footwear; **Tommy Hilfiger** trousers, **Kenneth Cole Reaction** footwear. (SEE PAGE 79 FOR DETAILS.)

www.who.knew.there.was.a.dress.code.com

www.someone.didn't.visit.the.weather.channel.com

LEFT TO RIGHT **Ted Baker** suit, **Tommy Hilfiger** shirt and neckwear, **Cole Haan** footwear, **D&G** belt; **Polo by Ralph Lauren** clothing, **Kenneth Cole Reaction** footwear; **Emporio Armani** shoulder bag, **Cole Haan** jacket, **Donna Karan** T-shirt, **Levi's** jeans, **Nautica** belt, **Johnston & Murphy** footwear, **Concord** watch; **D&G** jacket and skirt, **Stuart Weitzman** footwear, **Giorgio Armani** umbrella. (SEE PAGE 79 FOR DETAILS.)

Download Now

We've tested the new music subscription services. The result? They're not your daddy's Napster

TIME TO FACE THE MUSIC

So you've decided to go legit. With Napster in a legal choke hold and its freewheeling, free-music brethren—Kazaa, MusicCity, and Grokster—under legal duress of their own, living the life of a rogue MP3 trader just isn't as carefree as it once was. Sure, there's still plenty of free music out there, as our latest roundup reveals (see "Free Sites," page 73), but with each passing month it gets harder to find—and comes with more strings attached.

It's time to face the facts: The battle for music on the Web has been fought and won. The five major record labels, which control 80 percent of the world's music copyrights, are slowly, surely driving the illegal trade of MP3s underground. Last fall, federal agents raided dozens of college campuses to root out piracy and served some of the most active MP3 traders notice: Cool it or lose your broadband connection.

In the meantime, the major labels have rolled out their own online music services, which pay license fees to labels, artists, and songwriters. With a half dozen or so of them now online, it seems to be as good a time as any to venture out, credit card in hand, and take them for a spin.

But before we go, be warned: The new world of digital music bears little resemblance to the halcyon days of Napster—wild and woolly file-sharing this ain't. First on the list of gripes: Only one of the services—EMusic—offers songs in MP3 format or allows songs to be copied

BY MICHAEL LEARMONTH

Illustration by José G. Fernández

to a portable player. And since different services provide songs in their own proprietary formats, expect some headaches while all the players figure out how to play all the music. Further compounding their flaws, none of the other services is Mac compatible, though all of them say they've got Mac software in the works.

And let's not forget that unlike the first iteration of Napster, the new digital music services were conceived as businesses. That means your happiness is about third on their list of priorities, behind making money and staying out of court. In short, digital music is about their agenda now, not yours.

But the greatest drawback to all the new services is their limited libraries of available music. Even the two services with major-label backing, MusicNet (a system backed by BMG, EMI, Warner, and Zomba and licensed to several different services) and Pressplay (a stand-alone service run by Sony and Universal), have massive, almost comical holes in their repertoire. Want to hear U2? Forget about MusicNet. The Dave Matthews Band? You won't find it on Pressplay.

To be fair, the labels rushed these services to market and say they intend to both license larger catalogs of music and add more capabilities. Even their pitchmen admit that the new services are a work in progress. "It's good enough to criticize," says Rob Glaser, chairman and CEO of RealNetworks, about his company's RealOne Music service. "It doesn't have everything users want, but it is compelling."

Unlike the first iteration of Napster, the new digital music services were conceived as businesses. That means your happiness is about third on their list of priorities, behind making money and staying out of court

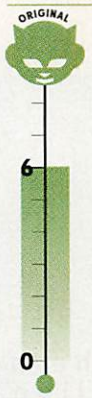
Because it racked up some 80 million users in less than two years, the original Napster set the standard. But sweep away nostalgia and it's easy to remember that the pioneer of song-swapping fell far short of perfection. While it was a great place to find stuff you already knew you liked, it didn't help you discover new music in any organized way. Plus, once you found something on a random hard drive in Des Moines (or Karachi, for that matter), it was hard to know how good the quality would be, or how long the download would take.

The good news is that most of the new services offer consistent quality and myriad features to expand your musical horizons. The services reviewed here fall broadly into two categories: those that mimic the feel of Napster, allowing you to download music, and those that stream their content to you on demand (and thus require an active connection to the Internet to listen).

So let's set the bar. In a perfect world, a digital music service would be reasonably priced. It would allow downloads in a widely supported format and not require special software to play. It would be portable, allowing you to easily transfer files to an MP3 player or burn them onto a CD. It would recommend new music and allow users to communicate with one another and share playlists. By this criteria the old Napster would score a strong 9 on a scale of 1 to 10. Sadly, none of the new offerings—not even the new Napster—scores higher than a 7.

PAY SITES

ON A SCALE OF 1-TO-NAPSTER (ORIGINAL FLAVOR), HERE'S HOW THE MAJOR MUSIC SERVICES SCORE



AOL Music

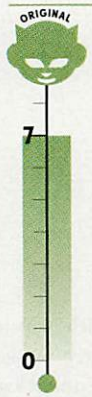
AOL Keyword: Music

THE DEAL $9.95/month for 100 downloads (listen all you want in a 30-day period) and 100 streams (listen once).

WHO'S ON BOARD The MusicNet engine, including more than 10,000 artists and 100,000 songs from Warner Music Group, EMI, BMG Entertainment, and Zomba. Artists include Radiohead, Missy Elliott, and Lucinda Williams.

THE ANGLE For AOL members it's as convenient as a keyword, and you can add your AOL music fees to your monthly ISP bill. It's also part of a wide array of other music services, such as Radio@AOL, Spinner, Winamp, and AOL's Artist Discovery Network.

FATAL FLAW Suffers the limitations of MusicNet: no portability and a limited catalog. And it's available only to those who use America Online.



EMusic

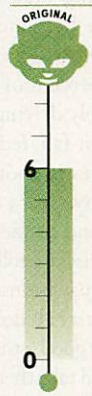
emusic.com

THE DEAL $14.99/month for a three-month minimum commitment, $9.99/month for a 12-month minimum commitment, or you can take the free 14-day trial.

WHO'S ON BOARD Because subscribers can download unlimited MP3s, the majors are unlikely to grant licenses. But EMusic has an eclectic array of 900 independent labels such as Matador, Ubiquity, and Fantasy.

THE ANGLE One of the few paid services that allows downloads in MP3 format. Downloaded songs are yours to keep; you can burn them to a CD, copy them to a portable, or (brace yourself!) share them with friends.

FATAL FLAW While it has some big-time artists, such as Elvis Costello and John Coltrane, you won't find current popular hits or major-label tracks here.



FullAudio

fullaudio.com

THE DEAL $8/month for 100 downloads; $16/month for 200 downloads. Unlimited 20-second previews.

WHO'S ON BOARD Deals signed with EMI Recorded Music and Universal Music Group bring Mariah Carey, Garth Brooks, and Jimi Hendrix.

THE ANGLE FullAudio will distribute its service through the sites of ClearChannel radio stations such as KBIG in Los Angeles and WKSC in Chicago.

FATAL FLAW Limited catalog and no portability, but FullAudio downloads can be mingled with your MP3 collection in Windows Media Player, Winamp, and Musicmatch software.

NOTE: MUSIC SERVICES ARE CHANGING ALL THE TIME. CHECK WITH THE SITES DIRECTLY FOR CURRENT SERVICES, PRICES, AND ARTIST SELECTION.

Listen.com

THE DEAL The cost is $5.95/month for unlimited streams from the Naxos Classical catalog; All Access (which includes the entire Listen.com catalog) is $9.95 per month.
WHO'S ON BOARD A slew of indies, such as Ninja Tune, Naxos, and Matador, and a few majors: BMG, EMI, and Sony. Stream tracks from DJ Spooky, Ella Fitzgerald, and Patsy Cline.
THE ANGLE An economic choice, especially for classical music.
FATAL FLAW Showing signs of becoming a real player, but still has a limited selection of tracks per artist.

Pressplay
pressplay.com

THE DEAL $9.95/month for 300 streams and 30 downloads; $14.95 per month for 500 streams, 50 downloads, and 10 burns; $19.95 per month for 750 streams, 75 downloads, and 15 burns; $24.95 per month for 1,000 streams, 100 downloads, and 20 burns.
WHO'S ON BOARD Pressplay has assembled one of the largest catalogs, with tracks from Sony, Universal, and EMI. Artists include Eminem, Coldplay, and Aerosmith.
THE ANGLE The CD-burning function is the hot feature here. Service will appear at Yahoo!, MSN, MP3.com, and Roxio.
FATAL FLAW The CD-burning feature is just as expensive as buying a shrink-wrapped CD, and—inexplicably—only two songs from any single artist can be burned per month.

RealOne
real.com

THE DEAL RealOne Music is $9.95/month for 100 downloads and 100 streams. RealOne Gold is $19.95 per month for 125 downloads, 125 streams, and access to premium RealOne video content.
WHO'S ON BOARD The ubiquitous MusicNet engine, with Warner, BMG, EMI, and Zomba. Includes artists such as Britney Spears, Linkin Park, and Fatboy Slim.
THE ANGLE RealOne integrates RealPlayer and RealJukebox in a system to manage music, burn CDs, and watch video.
FATAL FLAW It's a new player and media browser designed to be all things to all people. The software download is huge, and some consumers have reported trouble installing it.

(New) Napster
napster.com

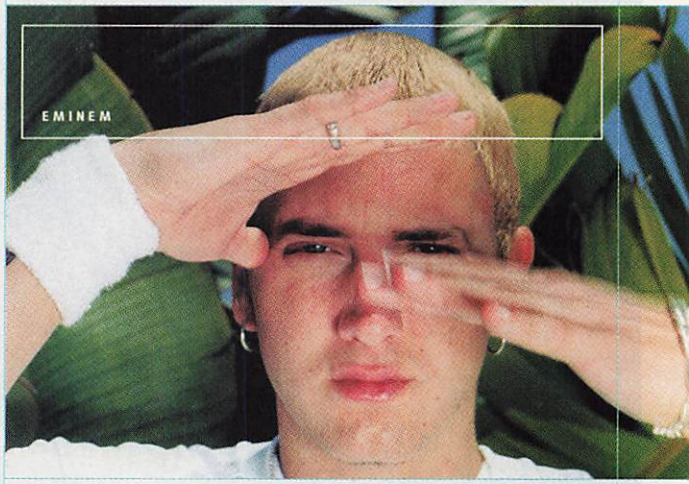
THE DEAL About $5 to $10 for 50 downloads a month and the ability to swap tracks with other Napster users.
WHO'S ON BOARD In the beta version (the one being tested at press time), about 110,000 tracks were available from independent labels such as Edel Music Group and TVT Records; includes Snoop Dogg, Guided by Voices, and Southern Culture on the Skids.
THE ANGLE The company is doing its best to preserve the feel of the old Napster, but it's unclear whether consumers will return from free services such as Kazaa and Gnutella.
FATAL FLAW It remains to be seen if any major label will grant licenses. Also, will you pay for something you used to get for free?

ALISON DYER/ICON INTERNATIONAL

FREE SITES

THE SONGS REMAIN THE SAME AT THE NET'S TOP FREE MUSIC SITES

Not ready to shell out for downloads? Free services continue to be hot draws for surfers...and lawyers. Here's our latest look (at press time) of the Web's top destinations for cost-free tunes



Audiogalaxy Satellite [audiogalaxy.com]

The current champion among free music sites. Audiogalaxy's quest to inherit the Napster mantle even got it mentioned on the TV show *Alias.* And it just may succeed: The interface looks a lot different, but the stunning variety is there. Search for "Ennio Morricone" and get hundreds of replies; search for "eminem" and get 23,000 (even the misspelling "enimem" will yield at least a hundred, and "enimen" a couple of hundred). It may take a while to warm up to the quirky Satellite software, but once you're proficient, AG rises head and shoulders above the rest.

Grokster [grokster.com] Kazaa [kazaa.com] MusicCity Morpheus [musiccity.com]

These three all access the same massive Amsterdam-based FastTrack network, which has more than 1.5 million users logged in at any given moment, rivaling Napster's numbers in its heyday. And you can trade movies and TV shows along with songs. The trio also share a similar user interface, designed to look like the old Napster. They are tricky to get started, however, and they will bombard you with ads and newsletters. An added frustration: Many of the downloads don't work. But consider that a side effect of tapping into a huge network. All three were given the ultimate seal of approval last year—the Recording Industry Association of America sued them for abetting copyright infringement. At press time, Kazaa had suspended downloads of its free software from its site.

Gnotella [gnotella.com]

Based on the open-source Gnutella system—free music's answer to Linux—Gnotella is the real geek's alternative to Napster. Its diffuse, vast, and seemingly unstoppable community of users continues to thrive underground, trading everything from Oasis songs to Harry Potter books. Still, as usual, the software takes a bit of tweaking to get started, and everybody seems to have his or her own version. Also, finding what you want can take some time, as the system searches across a number of networks. But while it might be the slowest of the services, it's also the most resilient. ■

20 NET SCAMS

The 20 Trickiest Online Scams and Schemes—and How to Avoid Getting Burned

DEEP WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE FEDERAL TRADE Commission's offices in Washington, D.C., is a powerful anticrime weapon known as "the refrigerator," and it's full of only one thing: spam. The fridge is a computer database containing more than 7.8 million pieces of suspicious e-mail forwarded to uce@ftc.gov by consumers from around the country. The FTC collects tens of thousands of these specimens a day as part of a broad-based effort to spot and shut down fraud on the Internet. "All of the old-fashioned scams are proliferating on the Net, and spam is a major marketing vehicle for fraudsters," says Eileen Harrington, associate director of marketing practices at the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection. "There are no cost barriers to advertise and promote, and anybody can set up a really impressive-looking site. It becomes difficult to distinguish between legitimate offers and illegitimate ones."

BY LAURA FISHER KAISER

KEVIN LEBY/GETTY IMAGES

rt. hand thumb

Here's how to spot some of the slimiest cons that pop up on your screen, and avoid becoming a statistic in the great Net rip-off.

IDENTITY THEFT

The Hook: "Urgent—Your Account Needs to Be Updated"

The Con: "Urgent" e-mails inform you that the credit card you signed up with is invalid or expired and the information needs to be reentered to keep the account active. These are sent by thieves posing as Internet service providers, bank representatives, or government agencies to get you to reveal personal information, which they then use to drain your cash, open new accounts, and worse.

Your Best Defense: Don't respond without independently checking with your ISP or whomever the e-mail claims to be from. Legitimate organizations usually have the information they need and don't ask you for it (certainly not via e-mail). The **Federal Trade Commission [www.ftc.gov]** has more information about this growing problem, along with online victim affidavit forms.

9-11 FRAUDS

The Hook: "Help Computer Experts Stop Terrorism"

The Con: In the wake of September 11, several mind-numbingly sleazy disaster-related scams cropped up. Initially, most sought to capitalize on the outpouring of money to charities, resulting in a flurry of unsolicited e-mails asking for donations, often to bogus organizations. As the war on terrorism took off, one e-mail going around asked for financial support for a group of computer "experts" who were supposedly attempting to track Osama bin Laden's whereabouts. The e-mail gave a bank account number to which donations could be deposited, and the name of an individual in the country of Estonia. Getting money back once it goes overseas is notoriously difficult—from the former Soviet bloc or a third-world country, it's virtually impossible.

Your Best Defense: Although many groups and individuals have harnessed the Net to mobilize help for disaster victims, and much of their information is helpful and accurate, crooks are trying to take advantage of the situation. Be cautious about any solicitation that mentions the disaster, even if it sounds legit. Confirm that charities are properly registered by contacting their state charities regulators, listed in the state government pages of the phone book, or by checking **Give.org: BBB Wise Giving Alliance [give.org]**. For more information about schemes related to September 11, see the U.S. Department of Justice's **Special Report on Possible Fraud Schemes: Solicitations of Donations for Victims of Terrorist Attacks [www.usdoj.gov/criminal/fraud/WTCPent-SpecRpt.html]**.

WORK AT HOME

The Hook: "Earn Big Bucks Sending Out Medical Bills"

The Con: Some work-at-home schemes have involved making crafts and stuffing envelopes. Lately, a popular one is medical billing. The sales pitch informs you of a "crisis" in the health care system owing to the overwhelming task of processing paper claims, creating a huge market for electronic billing centers. You are lucky enough to have been given the opportunity to invest several thousand dollars for this prepackaged business, which consists of little more than brochures, a few forms and testimonial letters, sample diskettes, and a videocassette. The reality is, few individuals are able to find enough clients for a viable operation. The medical billing market is fiercely competitive, revolving around a number of large and well-established firms.

Your Best Defense: Get all earnings claims in writing, and ask the promoter to give you the names of all or many previous purchasers; the FTC requires these outfits to provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the 10 such people who live closest to you. Interview these people in person, preferably where their business operates, to reduce your risk of being misled by shills and also to get a better sense of how the industry works.

CREDIT CARD FRAUD

The Hook: "View XXX Pics for Free"

The Con: Free, that is, as long as you provide your credit card number to "prove" you're over the age of 18. Fraudulent promoters then run up charges on your card.

Your Best Defense: Remember, there's no such thing as a free lunch, especially when cheesecake's on the menu. If you offer up your credit card number, be prepared to have your card charged, legitimately or not.

MEDICAL TREATMENTS & WEIGHT LOSS

The Hook: "Miracle Cure for Alzheimer's, Cancer, AIDS, and Gulf War Syndrome"

The Con: Virtual snake-oil salesmen hawk exotic potions and pills, strange magnetic or electrical devices, the ability to "burn fat while you sleep," "ancient" remedies, and "newly discovered" therapies for serious and chronic diseases. The curative claims are usually phony, exaggerated, or unproven.

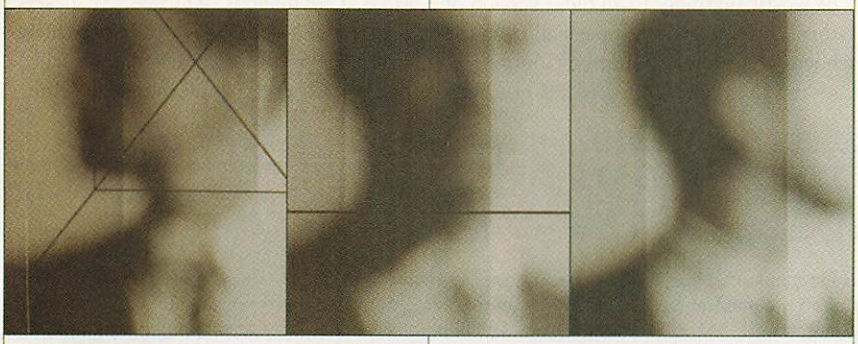
Your Best Defense: Look for hyperbole—key words such as "scientific breakthrough" and "secret ingredient," claims that a product cures a wide range of ailments, pseudoscientific phrases, undocumented case histories, "money-back" guarantees, claims that the product is available from only one source and advance payment is required, and conspiracy theories claiming the medical profession is in cahoots to suppress the product. Finally, ask yourself: If a medical breakthrough really occurred, would the news be announced first in a bulk e-mail or ad? To learn whether the FDA has issued a warning against a drug-selling Web site, see **Buying Medicines and Medical Products Online [www.fda.gov/oc/buyonline/enforce.html]**. Or follow the example of James Hood, editor of **ConsumerAffairs.com**, who replied to an e-mail for a product that allegedly makes you lose three to 15 pounds a night: "I hope you collect in advance since if this works as well as you say it does, I probably won't be around long once I start taking it."

CHAIN LETTERS

The Hook: "Make at Least $50,000 in Less Than 90 Days"

'All of the old-fashioned scams are proliferating on the Net. There are no cost barriers to advertise and promote, and anybody can set up a really impressive-looking site'

The Con: The classic chain letter, sent in a high-tech envelope. An e-mail instructs you to send a small amount of money ($5 to $20) to each of several names on a list, then replace one of the names with your own, and forward the revised list to thousands of new names using bulk e-mail. These schemes are almost always illegal and the majority of people who participate in them lose their money.
Your Best Defense: Delete these spams before getting sucked in. Don't believe it if the sender claims that the scheme is legal or endorsed by the U.S. government, even if the message cites sections of U.S. law that seem to legitimize the operation.



MULTILEVEL MARKETING PLANS

The Hook: "A Great Job in a Fast-Growing Company"
The Con: You make money through the products and services you sell, as well as those sold by people you recruit into the program. In other words, it's a pyramid scheme with products. You pay up front for "training" and inventory, and then you cover your own advertising and marketing costs. Some victims have had to file for bankruptcy protection after spending thousands with no return. As one woman of Ashville, Ohio, told ConsumerAffairs.com, "I took out a $12,000 loan against my home to purchase products because they really made me believe we would do well. I had to file for bankruptcy. My credit is ruined!"
Your Best Defense: Avoid plans that require you to recruit other distributors, buy expensive inventory, or pay a fee for an "opportunity meeting." For tips on evaluating a plan, see **FTC Consumer Alert!: Lotions and Potions: The Bottom Line About Multilevel Marketing Plans [www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/alerts/lotionalrt.htm]**.

FREE GOODS

The Hook: "Free Computers for You and Your Friends"
The Con: Another kind of pyramid scheme, in which you're promised "free" goodies—electronics, calling cards—just for joining a club. Once you pay the membership fee, however, you're told that you need to recruit a certain number of participants before you can collect the premiums. According to the FTC, "Almost all of the payoff goes to the promoters and little or none to the consumers who pay to participate."
Your Best Defense: Remember that you never get something for nothing. Some legitimate companies occasionally give away goods or samples in exchange for personal information or as a bonus when you buy another product. If you have to pay a fee for those goods or refer other warm bodies to the "club," it's no bargain.

BIOTERRORISM PRODUCTS

The Hook: "Colloidal Silver Kills Anthrax Safely"
The Con: Reports of anthrax exposure have spawned numerous Web sites and e-mails selling colloidal silver and antibiotics such as ciprofloxacin (Cipro). The only effective treatments known for biological agents such as anthrax and smallpox are approved prescription drugs and vaccines. Yet unscrupulous marketers sell knockoffs that could be counterfeit or contaminated. (The FTC has begun cracking down on purveyors of not only bogus medicinal cures but also dubious protection devices such as air filters, gas masks, protective clothing, and ultraviolet-light mechanisms.)
Your Best Defense: Talk to your health care professional before using any medications. Don't buy drugs from Web sites that are outside the U.S. (and therefore unregulated), that offer to prescribe drugs without a physical exam or prescription, or that sell drugs not approved by the FDA. For more information and links about bioterrorism products and protection, visit **FTC Broadens Warnings for Marketers of Bioterrorism Defense Products [www.ftc.gov/opa/2002/01/round2web.htm]**

AUCTION FRAUD

The Hook: "Free shipping with cash payments"
The Con: You mail or wire the cash, but the merchandise never arrives, and you never hear from the seller again. Or the item that you do receive is damaged or less valuable than what was described. By the time you figure out something is wrong, the seller has vanished with your money.
Your Best Defense: Never, ever pay in cash on the Web. For items under $200—the amount eBay covers in its Fraud Protection Program—use a credit card or an online payment service such as Billpoint or PayPal. For more expensive items or if you have any doubts, demand that the seller use escrow for payment. Also, on sites such as eBay, check out the seller's track record by reading the feedback others have posted.

INTERNATIONAL MODEM DIALING

The Hook: "See the Steamiest Pictures on the Web—Absolutely Free"
The Con: Want some free naughty pics? All you have to do is download a "viewer" or "dialer" software program. Of course, once the program is installed, it disconnects your Internet connection and reconnects to an international long-distance 900-type phone number at rates as high as $7 a minute. You then discover outrageous charges on your phone bill for calls to places such as Chad, Guyana, and Madagascar. There may also be charges from a non-telecommunications company that provides a billing service to the Web site. As one resident of Vero Beach, Florida, discovered, disputing the charges with the phone company didn't do any good because he did make the calls, however unwittingly.
Your Best Defense: If you see a pop-up window with a disclaimer, read the information *before* clicking OK. Better yet, hit Cancel. Should the modem start redialing, cancel the connection and restart your computer. If you use a second line for your modem, ask the local phone company to place an "international block" on it. If you fall for

this scam, file a complaint with the **FCC: Consumer Information Bureau [www.fcc.gov/cib]** by sending e-mail to fccinfo@fcc.gov.

ADVANCE-FEE LOANS

The Hook: "No Credit, No Problem"

The Con: The Better Business Bureau recently issued an international alert to warn consumers about advance-fee loan scam artists preying on consumers left vulnerable by the recession. The con artists advertised "easy guaranteed" loans on the Web. When consumers called a toll-free number, a friendly voice requested personal information (numbers for bank accounts, credit cards, social security), promised to send an application form, "confirmed" the loan approval, and then requested a fee for insurance. Each victim lost between $500 and $3,000.

Your Best Defense: These scams, which come in many guises, surge during uncertain economic times. Some guarantee home equity loans even if you don't have any equity in your house; others promise unsecured credit cards from "offshore banks" regardless of your credit history. Be wary of pressure tactics that force you to act immediately or "loan brokers" unwilling to disclose their location, a common ploy to avoid the law. Ask which lenders the broker deals with, including their address, and then contact the **BBB [bbb.org]** to request information.

DOMAIN REGISTRATION

The Hook: "Don't Be Left Out—Reserve Your Domain Now"

The Con: For a fee, you—the would-be Web site owner—are offered the opportunity to preregister domains in new top-level domain (TLD) names (*.aero, .biz, .coop*, and so on). However, whenever new TLDs become available, domains are in fact assigned on a first-come, first-served basis—so in the event that a new TLD does open up, there's no guarantee your reservation will be worth anything. In an older version of this scam, you receive an e-mail from the bogus "Internet Registration Committee" saying that your Web site has not been properly registered and therefore will be impossible for your customers to find.

Your Best Defense: Ignore unsolicited e-mail from companies that promise preferential treatment in the assignment of new top-level domain names. Instead, check **ICANN [icann.org]** to get the latest updates on the assigning process and find out what you really need to do in order to secure domain names.

CREDIT REPAIR

The Hook: "Brand New Credit File in 30 Days"

The Con: Firms sell instructions about how consumers with a bad credit history can substitute federally issued, nine-digit employee identification numbers for social security numbers and use them to build new credit profiles. They neglect to tell you that this practice, known as "file segregation," is a felony.

Your Best Defense: It takes time to rehabilitate a bad credit history, but legitimate organizations can help you get on track. A good place to start: the nonprofit **NFCC: National Foundation for Credit Counseling [nfcc.org]**.

VACATION PRIZE PROMOTIONS

The Hook: "Call Now to Claim Your Fabulous Vacation Package"

The Con: The electronic certificate may congratulate you on "winning" deep discounts on a dream vacation, but you haven't won anything at all. You're merely one of thousands, if not millions, of prospective suckers to receive this e-mail. Your "prize" is a far cry from the pages of *Travel & Leisure*—shabby hotels, junky cruise ships—although getting upgraded to merely awful accommodations and travel times before 2 A.M. is no problem if you're willing to pay a hefty fee.

Your Best Defense: If you're looking for a travel bargain, price-comparison sites such as **Orbitz [orbitz.com]** and **SideStep [sidestep.com]** can help you put together a package on your terms. But still get references on any travel company you plan to book with, and ask about cancellation policies, before signing on.

ADVANCE-FEE FRAUD

The Hook: "Confidential Business Proposal"

The Con: This scam—also known as the "4-1-9" fraud, after the section of the Nigerian penal code that addresses fraud schemes—has been around for more than a decade, but it's gotten new life through the Internet. You receive an e-mail from an alleged "official" of a foreign government or agency who urgently seeks a reputable U.S. company into whose account he can deposit up to $60 million, which his government overpaid on some procurement contract. Apparently $59 million or so will be moved out of the account

OUTSMARTING THE DOT CON ARTISTS

Nine things every surfer needs to know to stop cyber-grifters

1. Always wear your skeptic's hat. "If it seems too good to be true, it probably is," says Gwen Reichbach, executive director of the National Institute for Consumer Education. "That old saw still cuts."
2. Don't respond to e-mail from people and companies you don't know. That just shows them they're reached a working address. Simply hit Delete.
3. Avoid doing business with any company that fails to list its name, address, phone number, and other contact information on its site.
4. In general, don't give out personal information—social security number, mother's maiden name, financial account numbers, passwords, and other identifying information—unless you have initiated the contact or know specifically with whom you're dealing.
5. Use your credit card online only with companies that you trust and that have secure servers. If unauthorized charges appear, immediately write to your credit card's issuing bank to dispute them.
6. Check a company's track record through **Better Business Bureau: Check Out a Company [search.bbb.org/national/search.html]**, the state Attorney General's office or consumer protection agency, and complaint sites such as **ConsumerAffairs.com** (which maintains an impressive "Rogues Gallery") and **PlanetFeedback [planetfeedback.com]**.
7. When approached via the Net about a business opportunity, consult an attorney, accountant, or other business adviser before signing any agreement or forking over any money.
8. Bear in mind that although many bogus offers target the elderly and teenagers (who may have parents' credit cards), anyone can fall prey to Web scams and schemes.
9. If you do get scammed, report it your state's Attorney General. Immediately file a complaint with the FTC, toll-free, at 877-FTC HELP (877-382-4357), or use the forms at **[www.ftc.gov] or [consumer.gov/sentinel]**. L.F.K.

eventually, leaving you with a cool million-dollar commission. The victim is deluded into thinking he's been singled out to participate in this lucrative arrangement and that the con artist has strong ties to top government officials. Any doubts are dispelled by the appearance of false documents on government letterhead. The victim is requested to travel to Nigeria or a border country to complete the transaction. At each step of the way, the victim must fork over various fees, bribes, and other payments to save the venture. This scam gets even uglier—in 1995, an American in pursuit of a 4-1-9 deal was murdered in Lagos.

Your Best Defense: Don't let the promise of an inside deal tempt you for even a nanosecond. If you've lost money because of this scam, e-mail the U.S. Secret Service at 419.fcd@usss.treas.gov.

INTERNATIONAL SWEEPSTAKES

The Hook: "You've Won $2.5 Million in the Australian International Sweepstakes"

The Con: Whereas the Nigerian advance-fee scheme targets small businesses and charities, this mutant preys on individuals. In this case, before you can collect your prize, you need to wire a processing fee, and then an attorney's fee, and then a courier's fee, and guess what—you'll drain your bank account before you see a penny of this phantom fortune. And for some reason, Australia (or whatever country) is running the contest from some other offshore locale.

Your Best Defense: Get real. The chances that you, of all the people on the planet, would win an obscure sweepstakes you didn't sign up for are slim to none. On the off chance you did win, if the contest were on the up-and-up, you wouldn't be required to pay a bunch of frivolous fees before getting a check. Tell them to take it out of your winnings and cut you a check. If they put up a fuss, ask to see contest rules in writing and the promoter's physical address. Then check it out with the FTC.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Hook: "Be Your Own Boss—Earn Big"

The Con: You pay to get in on the ground floor of an exciting business venture in an up-and-coming market. Chances are, there's no evidence to back up the earnings claims.

Your Best Defense: Get all promises in writing and have a lawyer and an accountant look over the proposed contract before you sign it. "Think about it," advises the FTC's Harrington. "If I knew how to earn lots of money in my spare time without doing a lot of work, why would I be telling you about it and not off doing it myself?" Remember: If this biz op is so hot, why do these bozos have to promote it via bulk e-mail?

WEB CRAMMING

The Hook: "Custom-Designed Web Site for 30 Days—FREE"

The Con: You're promised a free Web site for a trial period, with no obligation to continue. You cancel after the 30 days—if your site gets designed at all—but are still charged, with the fees appearing on your phone bill. In 1999, the FTC sued five companies that had tried to sell bogus or uncancellable Internet-related service to more than 1 million small businesses eager to join the electronic marketplace. Sites that were created contained limited information about the businesses, included misinformation or misspellings, and lacked key features. Moreover, most of the sites are not listed with major search engines.

Your Best Defense: If your small business receives bills for services you didn't order, don't pay. The law allows you to treat unordered services as a gift. Review your telephone bills every month and challenge any charges you don't recognize.

BULK E-MAIL

The Hook: "Reach Millions of New Customers by E-Mail"

The Con: These bulk e-mail solicitations peddle yet more bulk e-mail lists with millions of addresses and software, but they fail to mention that if you use one of the automated programs, your ISP may shut you down. Sending unsolicited commercial e-mail violates not only the terms of service of most ISPs but also several state laws. "In addition," according to the FTC, "inserting a false return address into your solicitations, as some of the automated programs allow you to do, may land you in legal hot water with the owner of the address's domain name."

Your Best Defense: Invest in legitimate marketing methods and take a no-spam oath. Though it takes longer and may cost more, go for a bulk e-mail program that lets recipients "opt-in"—meaning no marketing e-mail unless it's solicited. ■

Spring Fashion Credits FROM PAGE 69

LUGGAGE, PAGES 62, 63 *Left to right:* Hartmann mobile traveler, $695 **[hartmann.com]**; Kenneth Cole woven day case, $275 **[kennethcole.com]**; T. Anthony Ltd. wardrobe trunk, $2,200, and T. Anthony Ltd. Barclay bag *(rear)*, $455 **[tanthony.com]**; Coach travel satchel *(front)*, $348 **[coach.com]**; Hartmann overnight garment sleeve, $395 **[hartmann.com]**; Cole Haan bowling bag, $295 **[colehaan.com]**; Hartmann wood-box pullman, $895 **[hartmann.com]**; T. Anthony Ltd. polo duffel, $395 **[tanthony.com]**. *On him:* Nautica jacket, $295, and trousers, $110 **[nautica.com]**; Donna Karan shirt, $125 **[www.donnakaran.com]**; Allen-Edmonds footwear, $285 **[www.allen-edmonds.com]**; D&G belt, $90 **[www.dolcegabbana.it]**.

WATCHES, PAGE 64 *Left, top to bottom:* Swatch Stalwart, $70 **[swatch.com]**; Gucci, $1,150 **[gucci.com]**; Oris Classic XXL, $925 **[www.oris-watch.com]**; Hamilton Everest, $400 **[www.hamiltonwatch.com]**; cK Primary, $80 **[swatchgroup.com]**; Monaco by TAG Heuer, $2,450 **[www.tagheuer.com]**. *Right, top to bottom:* Seiko Windward, $400 **[seikousa.com]**; Nautica, $135 **[nautica.com]**; Omega Speedmaster, $2,395 **[www.omega.ch]**; Movado Eliro, $1,495 **[movado.com]**; Tommy Hilfiger, $115 **[tommy.com]**; Breitling Navitimer Cosmonaute, $3,775 **[www.breitling.com]**.

CLOTHESLINE, PAGE 65 *Left to right:* 2(x)ist boxer briefs, $24 **[2xist.com]**; American Eagle Outfitters boxers, $12.50 **[ae.com]**; Joe Boxer boxers, $18 **[joeboxer.com]**; Calvin Klein briefs (3-pack), $19 **[macys.com]**; Jockey boxer briefs, $15 **[www.jockey.com]**; Chereskin briefs (3-pack), $12 **[freshpair.com]**; BOSS Hugo Boss briefs, $26 **[hugoboss.com]**; Malizia from La Perla bra, $119, and thong, $50 **[laperla.com]**; Stuart Weitzman footware, $180 **[stuartweitzman.com]**.

FEET, PAGES 66, 67 *Left to right:* Banana Republic trousers, $58 **[bananarepublic.com]**, and Rockport footwear, $90 **[rockport.com]**; Hickey Freeman trousers, $225 **[hickeyfreeman.com]**, and Johnston & Murphy footwear, $138 **[johnstonandmurphy.com]**; Claiborne trousers, $89.50 **[macys.com]**, and J.M. Weston footwear, $595 **[jmweston.com]**; Tommy Hilfiger trousers, $45.50 **[tommy.com]**, and Kenneth Cole Reaction footwear, $130 **[kennethcole.com]**.

WEATHER, PAGES 68, 69 *Far left:* Ted Baker suit, $595 **[www.tedbaker.com]**; Tommy Hilfiger shirt, $49.50, tie, $39.50, watch, $85 **[tommy.com]**; Cole Haan footwear, $285 **[colehaan.com]**; D&G belt, $90 **[www.dolcegabbana.it]**. *Second from left:* Polo Ralph Lauren shirt, $79.50, sweater, $225, blazer, $850, trousers, $57.50 **[polo.com]**; Kenneth Cole Reaction footwear, $120 **[kennethcole.com]**. *Covering head:* Donna Karan T-shirt, $150 **[www.donnakaran.com]**; Cole Haan jacket, $490 **[colehaan.com]**; Levi's LEJ jeans, about $70 **[levi.com]**; Johnston & Murphy footwear, $148 **[johnstonandmurphy.com]**; Nautica belt, $32 **[nautica.com]**; Emporio Armani shoulder bag, $298 **[emporioarmani.com]**; Concord watch, $1,490 **[www.concord.ch]**. *Woman:* D&G jacket and skirt, $630 **[www.dolcegabbana.it]**; Stuart Weitzman footwear, $180 **[stuartweitzman.com]**; Giorgio Armani umbrella, $195 **[giorgioarmani.com]**. ■

The Quest for the Holy Grail

BY ERIC MEYERS

Continuing the search for the perfect all-in-one device, a divine breed of gadgetry that can make phone calls, send and receive e-mails, play videos, and organize your life

You've got a cell phone in one hand, a PDA in the other, and a two-way pager dangling from your not-very-cool hip holster. You can always buy another pair of cargo pants or stash your gizmos in a geeky eight-pocket vest—but maybe it's not your wardrobe that needs upgrading. A new breed of converged devices that combine all your on-the-go needs—including wireless e-mail and Net access—are competing for space in the one pocket you're willing to stuff.

Of course, there's always the danger that the more tasks any one device attempts, the less well it will do any single thing. It's certainly true that the road to the Holy Grail is paved with trade-offs. The first compromise is size. Most all-in-ones weigh less than the handfuls of hardware they replace, but they can still feel like a brick if you're used to a Snickers-size Nokia phone or a tiny Motorola pager. Then there's the question of color screens: wonderful for Web surfing but expensive and power-hungry. And even though scribbling on-screen is fine for some, messaging mavens wouldn't dare travel without a built-in keyboard. Like it or not, thumb typing is the wave of the future.

With so many possible combinations of features and so many designs to accommodate them, there may one day be a unique Holy Grail gadget for every single person who wants one. That said, a select few—most notably Handspring's new Treo—do seem poised for mass popularity. Check the functions each device offers, see how we've rated them on our unique Four-Grail grading system, and decide if you're ready to empty your pockets.

Is This It?

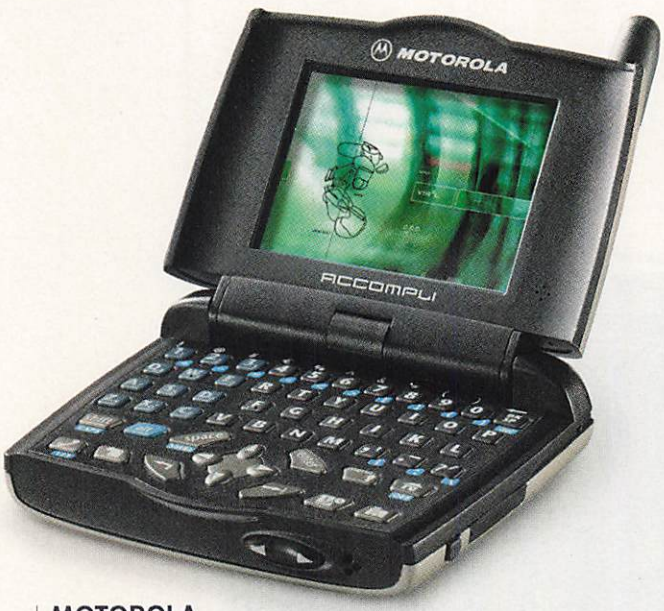
HANDSPRING TREO 180

For now, this is as close as you'll come. Handspring's heaven-sent handheld deftly combines a Palm organizer, phone, e-mail, and Net access (optimized by Handspring's Blazer browser) without ever making you regret this marriage of convenience. Not only are the weight and display size just right, but also the little keyboard makes pecking out a quick message, reminder, or URL a hell of a lot easier than Graffiti. Even the cover/earpiece is ingenious: when flipped up it's angled to keep cheek grease off the touch screen. **$399 with service activation [handspring.com]**

Features Guide

PHONE · WEB · E-MAIL · PDA · 2-WAY CHAT · IM · VIDEO CAMERA · STILL CAMERA

TURN THE PAGE TO CONTINUE THE QUEST →



MOTOROLA ACCOMPLI 009

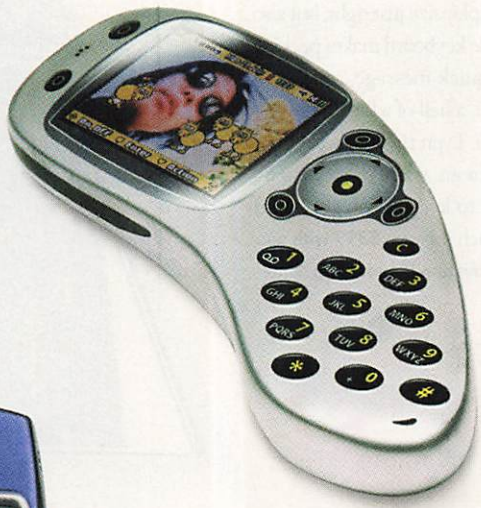
1/2

Its name may conjure images of secret-agent drama, but this pudgy pager specializes in more mundane activities: messaging and e-mail. In fact, the Accompli will juggle up to 10 e-mail accounts at a time and—with its always-on GPRS technology—can notify jet-setters of incoming messages on the fly. Unfortunately, the headset is a must if you want to place phone calls, and the WAP browser isn't nearly as much fun as the bundled Pac-Man–like game. **$649 [motorola.com]**

TELEPONG BOOMERANG

1/2

This curved communicator is targeted at talkative tweens and scheduled to debut in Europe this summer. The Stateside rollout is set for early '03, but will American kids be smitten with the color display and advanced text, photo, and audio messaging? A digital camera will be sold separately. Count on addictive gameplay—and a joystick. **About $315 [www.telepong.com]**



SENDO Z100 SMARTPHONE

1/2

Based on Microsoft's secret-weapon Smartphone Software Solution platform, the Z100 weighs next to nothing yet crams in everything from 65,000 colors to audio and video playback. But while having your Outlook-based e-mail and text messages in the same in-box is convenient, relying on the error-prone numbers-equals-letters typing technique may cause friends and colleagues to think you're corresponding from a bar stool. **Price not yet determined [www.sendo.co.uk]**

← SAMSUNG SPH-I300

1/2

One of three Holy Grail hopefuls with the Palm OS under their hood, the SPH is the only one with a 256-color screen (a color Treo model is still a few months away). Yes, the extra hues cut down on talk time, but the second slot in the recharging cradle holds a spare battery so you can swap and go. Less forgivable is the lack of a cover, though the top-mounted LCD lets you check who's calling without having to pull the device out of your pocket. **$499 [samsungusa.com]**

↓ NOKIA 9290 COMMUNICATOR

Closed, it looks like a cell phone straight from the early '90s, but pop open this high-end (and high-priced) silver dialer, and you'll quickly discover why it might also be your next laptop. The horizontal display supports 4,000-plus colors—great for surfing and office work—and the keys are placed far enough apart to type with your fingertips. Other perks include RealPlayer Mobile and a 16MB MultiMedia Card for loading extra apps. One convergence caveat: You have to hold the handset backward (with the dial pad away from your face) when you're on the phone. **$800 [nokiausa.com]**

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← ORIGAMI MOBILE COMMUNICATOR

Designed to take convergence to its ludicrous but somehow still tantalizing extreme, the aptly named Origami concept device reveals a new function with every fold. The integrated camcorder enables impromptu videoconferences, and built-in Bluetooth lets you print wirelessly from up to 30 feet away. It's pretty heavy for a cell phone; then again, your StarTac doesn't run Windows XP. **Price not yet determined [national.com]**

→ PC-EPHONE

1/2

There's a very good reason that rumors had this clunky Windows-flavored concept phone dead before its arrival. Sure there's enough real estate for a superwide high-resolution color display, but there won't be space for much else in your messenger bag. The on-screen keyboard works well enough, and executive types will surely be wooed by the 206-MHz processor and the heavy-duty office apps. But as an on-the-go gadget for the rest of us, it's a bit much. Expect to see it in specialized corporate deployments. **$999 [pc-ephone.com]**

→ KYOCERA QCP-6035 SMARTPHONE

While deserving of props for leading the PDA-plus-phone revolution, this once-groundbreaking Palm OS–based pioneer is graying fast. Without color and a keyboard, it's already old news. On the other hand, gray scale isn't a bad thing if it leads to longer battery life. Plus, there's the tactile reassurance of a real dial pad. What ultimately makes this smart phone a not-so-smart idea is its undesirable heft. Watch for big price cuts on these babies. **$399–$499 [kyocera-wireless.com]**

↑ DANGER HIPTOP

1/2

With a nifty swivel screen, soft rubberized keyboard, and a price that's as friendly as its compact proportions, the Hiptop could be the first hybrid hit for the masses. A behind-the-scenes service speeds up online access and lets the device send and receive e-mail with attachments—including pictures if you spring for the attachable digital camera. But where's the built-in digital audio player? **$200 [danger.com]**

And Just Around the Corner...

All these Holy Grail gadgets give us an exciting glimpse of the future. Too bad they depend on communications infrastructures that are hopelessly bogged down in the past. We keep hearing about superfast third-generation (3G) communications networks that will let you watch the entire *Star Wars* saga on your video-equipped phone, but where are they? Ask us again in four years (even Japan can't seem to get its act together on this one). In the meantime, you'll have to settle for the low-bandwidth present.

Fortunately, settling may not be such a bad thing. Although they go by different acronyms (GPRS or 1xRTT), new services being rolled out right now by major cellular players such as AT&T, Sprint, and VoiceStream will let us browse at dial-up-like speeds (or faster) from anywhere we roam, while doubling the system's voice capacity—which means that fewer calls will get dropped mid-sentence.

In fact, of the 10 Holy Grail hopefuls we rounded up, six are already optimized for the interim 2.5G standard, a technology that provides phones with faster wireless connections. That's not to say the stragglers—including the PC-EPhone and trio of Palm-based phones—are instantly obsolete. Handspring will make a software upgrade available on its site for the Treo to join the 2.5G ranks. It's a little harder to excuse the PC-EPhone, which can take a minute to load a pop-up ad, but version 2.0 of the device will include a keypad. E.M.

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web guide

WHERE TO, HOW TO, BEST OF: OUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO LIFE ON THE WEB EDITED BY CREE McCREE

MARTIN PARR/MAGNUM

INSIDE

New, Notable & Fun 88
This month's hot picks

Entertainment & Sports 90
Trendspotting: Bring Back the Buzz
Plus: The Oscars, Ticket Brokers, Dead Rockers

Travel & Recreation 92
Getaway Guru: A Good Time to Go
Plus: Winery Tours, Snow Sports, Romantic Trips

Money & Shopping 94
Money Matters: Home Loans on the Fly
Plus: Bargain Hunters, Garden Goods, Work at Home

Web Lab 98
Best Home-Buying Sites

PICTURE YOURSELF ON THE SNOW

It's easy enough to do when live Web cams can transport you to mountains around the world. Whether you want the four-star high of an exclusive ski resort or seek slopes less traveled for cross-country treks, you can plan and book your trip online. Looking for more extreme action? You'll find plenty to rock your world, from mountainboards that sneer at slush to streamlined Skimbats that let you "wingsurf" across a field of snow, on page 93.

GUEST GUIDE 91
Designer Diane von Furstenberg

EXPERT OPINION 93
Danger Finder Robert Pelton

SPOTLIGHT 97
Net-Branded Credit

web guide

new, notable & fun

WHAT'S HOT — AND COOL — ON THE WEB THIS MONTH

BY MEAGHAN O'NEILL

RELAUNCH

Gloss.com Launched in 1999, this click-and-buy boutique took a yearlong beauty rest while Estée Lauder, Chanel, Mac, and other upscale vendors gave it a makeover. The branded shops offer more than 5,000 products, plus tips on using them. **[gloss.com]**

Sears.com Ideally, you'd browse for a barbecue grill or a lawn mower on the Web but avoid shipping charges by buying offline, right? Sears.com got the message. Now you can purchase such an item online and pick it up at a local Sears branch. Also new at the site: a clearance center, as well as shipping to APO and FPO military addresses. **[sears.com]**

PUBLIC SAFETY

Chemical Industry Archives The Environmental Working Group is determined to reduce pollution and improve public health by scrutinizing the government's safety standards. To do this, the group uses its own research as well as data obtained through lawsuits against the chemical industry. One chilling fact: Of the approximately 70,000 chemicals currently in commercial use, the Environmental Protection Agency has requested tests for only 263 of these potential pollutants as of 1998. **[chemicalindustryarchives.org]**

NTI: Nuclear Threat Initiative When the Cold War ended, the specter of nuclear war faded from the headlines. But NTI, founded by Ted Turner and Sam Nunn, aims to call new attention to the problem and ultimately lessen the risk of nuclear, biological, and chemical attacks. Research such topics as the weapons capacity of newly independent states. **[nti.org]**

PORTAL PATROL

Riding the heels of competitors who provide Internet service as well as content, Yahoo! [yahoo.com] will soon offer cobranded digital subscriber lines with SBC, the high-speed ISP that acquired dial-up provider Prodigy. The portal has also penned a deal with SpotLife to provide personal video e-mail services at Yahoo! Mail [mail.yahoo.com]. For details, see this month's Web User.

To compete with AOL's Mobile Communicator, MSN [msn.com] now offers Hotmail users the Motorola Talkabout T900 two-way pager (about $160). Good news for slow typists: Monthly plans charge by the letter instead of the minute; get 25,000 characters for $14.95, or up to 100,000 characters for $29.95.

America Online and Yahoo! recently joined forces with more than 20 nonprofit companies to create Network for Good [networkforgood.org]. Find nearly 850,000 charities listed, plus thousands of volunteering opportunities.

SPOTLIGHT

ERIN GO BROWSE

March may come in like a lion and go out like a lamb, but what's the catalyst for transformation? Could it be St. Patrick's Day? Irish Americans don't care whether you're of Italian or feline descent as long as you wear green, grab a pint, and join in the festivities. To get in the mood, tune into **RTÉ Interactive Radio [www.rte.ie/radio]**. You won't hear any hokey pub songs here, but you can check out Raidió na Gaeltachta, broadcast entirely in Gaelic, as well as three other news and music stations. To dress the part, deck out the living room, or to get a Bloom's-eye view of Dublin's O'Connell Bridge, stop by **Celtic.com**. Now for the important stuff: **Guinness.com**. Learn about the history of the "deep dark ray of sunshine," get tips on how to brew your own, or join the 1759 Society (21 and older only, please). Better yet, head out to your local pub, pull up a stool, and get yourself a draft. Enjoy.

POSTER: KEVIN SCHAFER/CORBIS

MEDIA

Daypop Frustrated when he couldn't find the daily dish he wanted during the 2000 U.S. presidential election, Dan Chan created Daypop, a current events search engine. Include news sites and weblogs in your search, or limit results to one or the other. **[daypop.com]**

Lip Magazine If your political views lean toward the left, you'll appreciate this online zine, which looks at such issues as "How Mass Media Fails Democracy." **[lipmagazine.org]**

ARTIFACTS

Devices of Wonder The Android Clarinetist (1838), a 6-foot-2-inch automaton, invites visitors into this whimsical Getty Museum exhibit with 20-odd historic toys and optical devices. Relics such as the Sorceress's Mirror (1700s) are still neat today. **[getty.edu/art/exhibitions/devices/choice.html]**

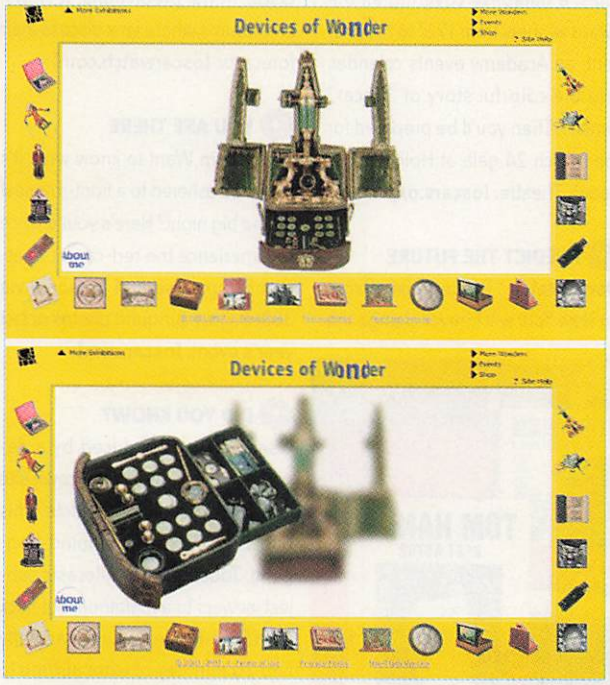
Sleeping Giants In the heart of the Arizona desert rest thousands of retired U.S. Air Force craft—an "aviation afterlife." This video shows the regeneration of the majestic machines. **[kodak.com/US/en/corp/features/sleepingGiants]**

EDUCATION

INet Library Schools subscribing to this service give teachers and students access to an online database linking to more than 200,000 educational sites, reviewed for quality. **[inetlibrary.com]**

Nova Online Teachers Instructors can search the database at the site for PBS's *Nova* for educational materials, including program contents, lesson plans, and online activities. **[www.pbs.org/nova/teachers]**

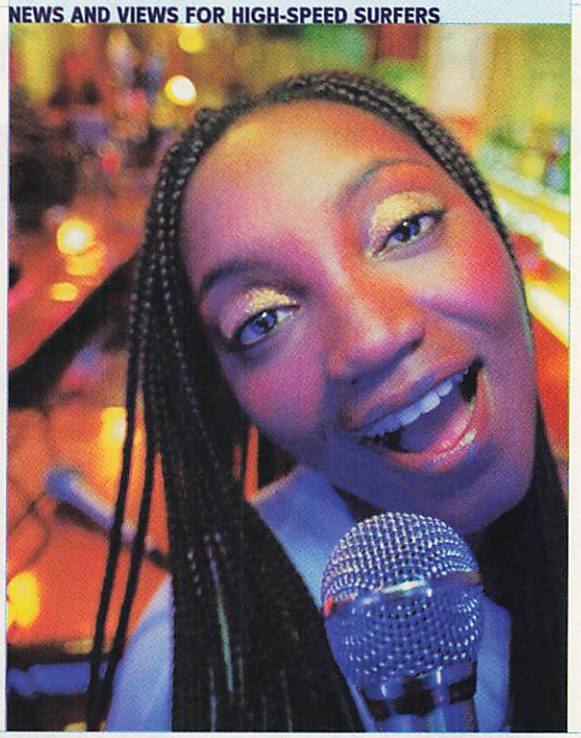
Adventure Learning Foundation Teachers and students stuck in the classroom can follow global treks at this nonprofit, whose mission is to help students understand various cultures and promote Net use in schools. **[questconnect.org]**



GIRL: CHRISTOPH WILHELM/GETTY IMAGES

THE FAT PIPE

NEWS AND VIEWS FOR HIGH-SPEED SURFERS



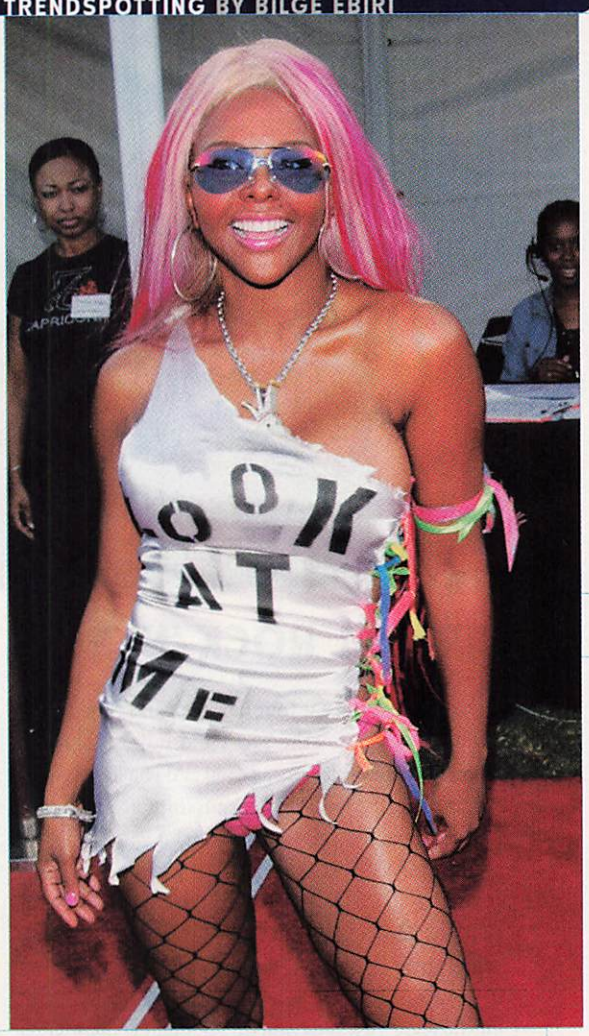
VIRTUAL ROCK 'N' ROLL

Eric Clapton, eat your heart out. It's time for air-guitar karaoke. Buy the $70 Band Edition of **MusicPlayground [musicplayground.com]** and you'll get a wired guitar pick that lets you play anything from a tennis racket to a tabletop; a virtual drum kit with sticks; and 50 songs on CD-ROM to play along with (everything from Elvis to J.Lo). On-screen indicators tell you when to strum and tap, and with a little practice, the results sound great. To get more music, head to the Net, where you can quickly download 25 more songs from the online jukebox for $34.95 or 10-tune SongPacks for $12.95 each. Musicians can join the virtual panel by patching in their instruments or playing along "unplugged."

ONLINE ALBUMS Why simply mail snapshots to the relatives when you can turn them into online productions? **Neptune Mediashare [neptune.com]** helps you assemble and store great-looking Flash-based photo and video albums—complete with captions, effects, and music—that friends and family can access via a simple URL. Although the service limits individual albums to 10 photos (to keep download times reasonable), you can have multiple albums; 25MB of storage is $39 a year. Not surprisingly, you'll need a broadband connection to create and view video albums.

DON WILLMOTT

TRENDSPOTTING BY BILGE EBIRI



BRING BACK THE BUZZ

Where are all the juicy showbiz sites of yesteryear?

Where have all the entertainment sites gone? No, not the much-hyped, long-dead downloadable film sites that made such a splash a couple of years ago but sites such as Mr. Showbiz, which dished out celebrity news and gossip. Some of these were among the Web's most popular destinations at the turn of the century, and the Net seemed ready-made for providing us with quick bytes of Hollywood info. But now Mr. Showbiz and Roughcut.com are long gone, **Reel.com**'s output has been severely curtailed, and **Real.com: Film.com [film.com]** is barely there. What happened?

Although some entertainment sites failed for the usual reasons (they got too big, too fast; they didn't turn a profit), in many instances, it was a case of corporate misfortune. TNT's Roughcut.com became a casualty of the AOL Time Warner merger consolidation; Mr. Showbiz, one of the Net's oldest entertainment ventures, fell victim to the parent company Disney's complete restructuring of its failing Web operations.

So where should one go in their wake? **E! Online [eonline.com]** is still around, and it serves to fill many of the gossipy gaps left behind by Mr. Showbiz. So does **EW.com**, the online home of *Entertainment Weekly* magazine. And **The Internet Movie Database [imdb.com]** is the Grand Old Man of showbiz information. But the fact remains that in these trying times, when we could use a little light diversion, the once thriving world of entertainment news sites has become something of a wasteland. Here's hoping that the vibrant domain of dish will one day make a comeback. George Clooney and Sharon Stone aren't getting any younger.

MOVIES

ACADEMY AWARDS

STUDY THE HISTORY

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences AMPAS maintains a rich archive of pictures, drawings, and historical information. Access official rules, a database covering all the award winners from 1927 to the present, an Academy events calendar, and the colorful story of "Oscar" himself. Then you'll be prepared for the March 24 gala at Hollywood's Kodak Theatre. **[oscars.org]**

PREDICT THE FUTURE

OscarWatch "The terrorist attacks on New York will forever change the workings of Hollywood movies," said director Mike Figgis. That said, it's also true that movie lovers will forever escape reality by going to Hollywood films. This site is packed with Oscar news, predictions, reviews, and forums where fans discuss their forecasts. **[oscarwatch.com]**

YOU ARE THERE

Oscar.com Want to know what it's like to be ushered to a front-row seat on the big night? Here's your chance to experience the red-carpet treatment—up close and personal via 360-degree surround photos of last year's event. **[oscar.com]**

DID YOU KNOW?

Oscar, Oscar! Produced by a devoted cineast, this homegrown site unearths plenty of fun facts. This one's among the most mind-boggling: Today's Oscar telecasts subject viewers to a marathon, but back in 1958, host Jerry Lewis actually had 20 minutes of extra airtime to fill. **[oscarworld.net]** LINDA KELLY

LIVE EVENTS

TICKET BROKERS

USER EXCHANGE

OpenSeats.com Some sites, such as **Playbill On-Line [playbill.com]** and **Ticketmaster [ticketmaster.com]**, are great for buying tickets to Broadway shows and other events. But what if you're seeking seats for a hot show such as U2's Elevation tour, which sold out in minutes in most cities? This eBay-like exchange for buyers and sellers has the broadest selection we found, with more than 75,000 registered users offering tickets to events in 46 cities (including some in Canada). There's no fee to post or access listings; OpenSeats asks users to pay a "voluntary success fee" of 5 percent of the ticket price when they complete an exchange. **[openseats.com]**

RESALE CENTRAL

TicketCity.com Don't want to deal with individual sellers? Try TicketCity, which purchases tickets from box offices, season holders, and other resellers. The site is certified by the National Association of Ticket Brokers, and if it fails to come through on a promised order, it actually issues a 200 percent refund. The tradeoff: TicketCity's prices are often higher than the best deals available on OpenSeats. **[ticketcity.com]**

PREMIUM SPORTS

Frontrow.com OpenSeats and TicketCity get you into arts-related performances and regional athletic contests, but for the elite sporting events, Frontrow is your best source. It handles college and pro games and brokers premium events such as Wimbledon, the Super Bowl, and the Winter Olympics. Be prepared to fork over big bucks: The Wimbledon packages, which include airfare from the U.S., start at $4,000. **[www.frontrow.com]** DEAN FOUST

GUEST GUIDE

DESIGNER DIANE VON FURSTENBERG

This globe-trotting designer has acquired the ultimate Internet status symbol: his-and-her Web sites. While hubby Barry Diller ventures online with the recently acquired Expedia.com, she maintains her own fashionable presence at **Diane von Furstenberg [dvf.com]**. Some of her favorite sites:

STYLE.COM It's like a great fashion magazine, with runway reviews and video highlights. I especially appreciate the fact that you can go online and see collections from the shows the very next day. **[style.com]**

EXPEDIA.COM Sometimes I get a call that I have to be someplace else in the world next week, and I plan my complete trip here. I love that you can do it all by yourself, in the middle of the night if you want. **[expedia.com]**

EBAY I think eBay is the most revolutionary idea. Although I've never bought anything there myself, it amuses me to see my vintage designs up at auction. **[ebay.com]**

THE NEW YORK TIMES ON THE WEB When I am traveling abroad, the first thing I read (after I check my e-mail) is the Times on the Web. **[nytimes.com].** SUSAN BRESLOW SARDONE

VON FURSTENBERG: JACK CHUCK/CORBIS OUTLINE; COBAIN: CHARLES PETERSON/RETNA

POP CULTURE

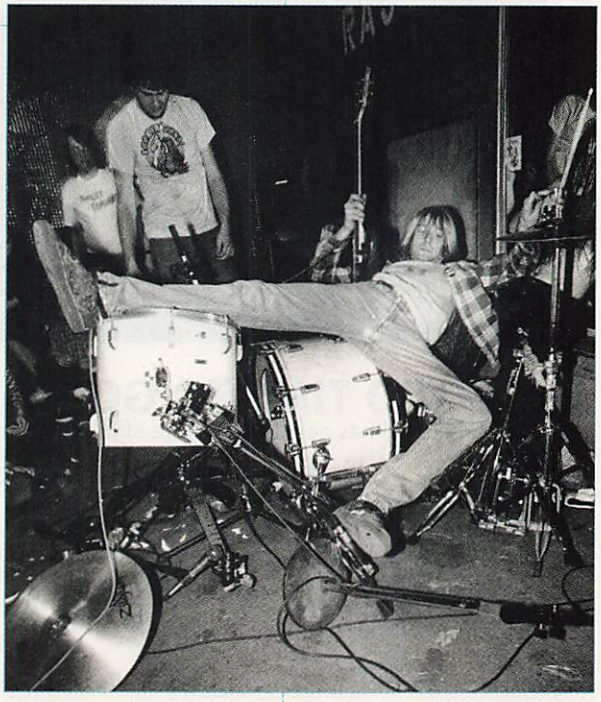
DEAD ROCK STARS

GRIM REAPERS

Fuller Up, The Dead Musician Directory; The Dead Rock Stars Club Rock 'n' roll may never die, but those who create it often die young. From the classic heroin ODs to the more unlikely causes of death (Toto's Jeff Porcaro succumbed to an insecticide), Fuller Up details how those who dared to play the devil's music left this mortal coil. For a continually updated roll call of the deceased, visit "the club rock stars are dying to get into." **[elvispelvis.com/causesofdeath.html]; [users.efortress.com/doc-rock/deadrock.html]**

THE END

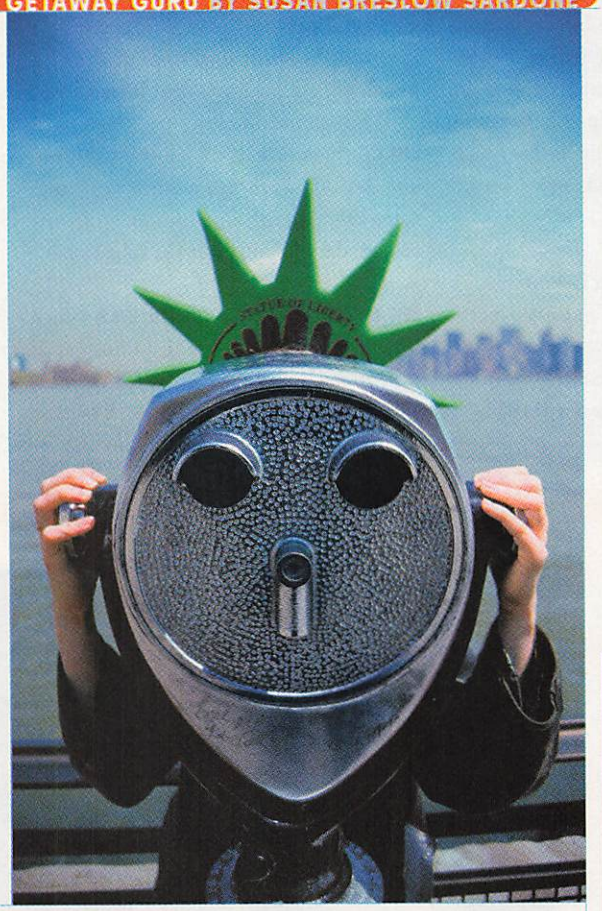
The Kingdom of Morrison Maybe it's his dark, morbid lyrics or the romantic circumstances of his death from heart failure at the age of 27 (found sitting up in a Paris hotel bathtub, a smile on his face), but Doors vocalist Jim Morrison remains the paradigm of the rock star whose light burns out faster than a shooting star's. Break on through to the other side with a large selection of articles and pictures of the Lizard King, reminiscences by friends and fellow Doors, information on finding Jim's grave, and much more. **[geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Palms/2914]**



IN UTERO

The Kurt Cobain Internet Shrine The Nirvana front man was 27 when he shot himself full of smack and bullets—the same age Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix, and Janis Joplin were when they died. This site deals plenty of dope on the man some fans believe wife Courtney Love drove to his death—a theory you won't find debated in the Kurt Cobain forum ("*Please*, no murder theories!"). **[kurt-cobain.com]** FRANK GREEN

GETAWAY GURU BY SUSAN BRESLOW SARDONE



A GOOD TIME TO GO

Online travel has never been more affordable

Yes, the world of travel has changed. With a weak economy and fewer passengers after the September 11 attacks, airlines have reduced the number of flights. And long waits for security clearance can make airport check-in a drag. Still, this may be as good a time to travel as any in recent memory. Here's why:

FARES ARE LOWER Since unfilled seats don't do the airlines any good, the bargains are superb, says senior analyst Henry Harteveldt of Forrester Research. "And the best place to get them is online," Harteveldt says. "When there's a fare war or a promotion, the Web is often the first place it turns up."

LAST-MINUTE OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND According to **Site59 [site59.com]** CEO Michelle Peluso (see "Romantic Trips," page 93), 20 percent of purchases are made a day before departure, and 80 percent of travelers buy within seven days. "Now, more than ever, people don't want to plan ahead for travel," Peluso says. In response to the perceived trend, the site recently began offering its eleventh-hour escape packages in conjunction with **Priceline.com**.

CUSTOMER SERVICE IS BETTER In the wake of the terrorist strikes, it became more important than ever for sites to communicate quickly with consumers. Within 15 minutes after the Federal Aviation Administration ordered planes grounded on September 11, **Orbitz [orbitz.com]** was in contact with customers via e-mail, telephone, pager, and its site, with updates on airport status, flights, and safety policies, says chief executive Jeff Katz. Online travel agents met the challenge then, and they continue to do so.

NEW YORK IS ON SALE To tempt tourists back to the Big Apple, **NYC & Company [nycvisit.com]** launched Freedom Packages, offering deep discounts on hotels, Broadway shows, and restaurants through March 31. "Now is probably the best time for a leisure traveler" to book a trip to New York, Harteveldt says.

SPECIALTY TRIPS

WINERY TOURS

GLOBAL VARIETALS

Vine2wine.com Filled to the brim with information, this abundant directory links to wineries and vineyard tours worldwide, from Slovenia to Tasmania to India. Whether you're looking for a romantic B&B getaway or a good old-fashioned backpacking trip, planning a spirited vacation never tasted so good. **[vine2wine.com]**

VIVE LE VIN!

French Wine Explorers Soak up the rustic countryside while sampling the wealth of classic wine-producing regions such as Champagne, Alsace, Beaujolais, and Provence. Join a small group tour, create a customized trip with a private sommelier, and even enjoy a six-course wine-tasting dinner in a Parisian bistro. Travel arrangements are made for you—all you have to do is show up with a thirst for experience. **[wine-tours-france.com]**

WATER TO WINE

TraVent Cruise to international ports both traditional (the coast of Italy) and exotic (the Society Islands) while learning from oenophiles and vintners aboard the ship how to distinguish fine bouquets. **[finewinetravel.com]**

LINDA KELLY

ROMANTIC TRIPS

PASSION TO GO

Lovetripper.com Whether romance to you means watching the sunset from a Maui beach or riding the rails through Mexico's Copper Canyon, the well-traveled editors of this online magazine offer trail-tested advice to lovers of every stripe. Get tips on everything from planning destination weddings to "gambling on love" in Macao. **[lovetripper.com]**

CITY OF LIGHT

Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau With its sidewalk cafés, legendary nightlife, and charming culs-de-sac, Paris is a haven for sweethearts. The city's official site can guide you to all the hot spots: Steal a kiss atop the Eiffel Tower, stroll hand in hand along the Seine, or explore the Père Lachaise cemetery—the final resting place of Oscar Wilde, Edith Piaf, and other romantic souls. **[www.paris-touristoffice.com]**

INN-TIMATE GETAWAYS

TravelGuides.com Pamela Lanier's savvy guide to bed-and-breakfasts is searchable by location and facilities, including settings conducive to romance. Pick your fancy, pack your bags, and grab your mate for a cozy retreat. Looking to splurge? Click over to Elegant Small Hotels for luxury digs from Anguilla to Zimbabwe, including all 50 U.S. states. **[travelguides.com]**

ELEVENTH-HOUR ESCAPES

Site59 The travel site for spontaneous souls, Site59 offers hundreds of high-quality discount flight and hotel packages to destinations in North America, the Caribbean, and Europe. **[site59.com]** ALEXIS ADAMS

SNOW SPORTS

ALL DOWNHILL

Ski Moguls, powder, steeps...if God didn't want us to enjoy winter, why create snow? Using the venerable *Ski* magazine's resort rankings and reviews, forum feedback, and a convenient link to MySkiTrip.com, you can quickly plan a slopes vacation. Whet your appetite with the live mountain cams and the Women Who Rip slide show (for maximum impact, click up to Huge). **[skimag.com]**

SLOPES LESS TRAVELED

Cross Country Ski Areas Association Use the resort guide to locate cross-country trails throughout the U.S. and Canada. You'll also find daily snow reports for U.S. sites and resorts and an equipment directory that includes snowshoes, sleds, and pulks as well as classic Nordic gear. Don't want to leave Fido behind? Check XC Skiing with Your Dog. **[xcski.org]**

CUTTING EDGE

Snowboarding.com As its name suggests, this site is an all-access pass to snowboarding news, events, instruction, and gear—not to mention the sport's latest high-adrenaline rush: mountainboarding, which allows extreme athletes to traverse not just snow but ice, slush, mud, and rocks. Amaze your friends while achieving suborbital velocity over virtually any steep terrain. **[snowboarding.com]**

SNOWBIRDS

Skywings Leave it to the Finns to extract maximum thrills from a long winter. Using ultralight Skimbats, they "wingsurf" across snow and ice. Find out how it's done by watching QuickTime movies, and read about the history of ice surfing. **[skywings.fi]**

CARL FRANZ, LORENA HAVENS

SKIMBATS: OTTO SUNNARI; PORTRAIT COURTESY OF ROBERT YOUNG PELTON

DANGER FINDER ROBERT YOUNG PELTON

"The most dangerous thing in the world is ignorance," says Pelton, author of *The World's Most Dangerous Places*. At press time, Pelton was heading to war-torn Afghanistan, where he spoke to American Taliban fighter John Walker for the exclusive, controversial interview aired by CNN in December. Beyond his own **Dangerous Places [comebackalive.com/df]**, he recommends these destinations:

BBC NEWS The BBC offers the best coverage of the entire world. **[news.bbc.co.uk]**

YAHOO! NEWS: WORLD FULL COVERAGE Get stories by country, with links to local media to learn what's going on beyond the tourist dribble. **[dailynews.yahoo.com/fc/world]**

OSAC: OVERSEAS SECURITY ADVISORY COUNCIL Consult this listing of global conflicts and incidents before you officially book that exotic excursion. **[www.ds-osac.org]**

CDC: TRAVELERS' HEALTH Prior to departure, check here for region-specific health concerns. **[cdc.gov/travel]**

HEIDI LAFLECHE

MONEY MATTERS BY DEAN FOUST

HOME LOANS ON THE FLY

Well, not quite yet—but you can find great rates on the Net

For a generation of homeowners who burned with envy when Uncle Marvin boasted of the 5 percent mortgage he took out back in the 1950s, the recent plunge in interest rates has been a once-in-a-lifetime boon. With the Federal Reserve trying to revive the economy by providing easy credit, mortgage rates have plunged to levels not seen in decades. And finding the right mortgage isn't as hard as it used to be: **LendingTree [lendingtree.com], Bankrate.com, Quicken.com: Quicken Loans [quickenloans.com]**, and other sites let prospective homeowners shop for the best rate from local lenders.

Alas, while the Net can help you find the cheapest mortgage, chances are you'll still have to complete the transaction the old-fashioned way—with pen, paper, and bundles of old bank statements. That's because lenders still haven't determined how to digitize the blizzard of paperwork required for getting a mortgage—much less bring along other players, such as the county clerks who hold deed and tax records. "It's still largely an offline process," notes Matthew Carrick, an analyst at Gómez, Inc., adding that a paperless transaction is "probably just two years away."

Still, Carrick says, some e-lenders are making some headway. **Wells Fargo [wellsfargo.com]** now allows existing mortgage holders with prior records on file to refinance online, with little paperwork involved. **InterFirst [interfirst.com]** is conducting almost the entire mortgage process online, although access currently is limited to the company's own nationwide network of 5,300 brokers. So, homeowners, take heart: Your next mortgage might be as cheap as your Uncle Marvin's, and a lot easier to get. (For more tips on home-buying online, see Web Lab, page 98.)

ONLINE SAVINGS

BARGAIN HUNTERS

ONE-STOP SHOP

FatWallet.com Key in to a passel of hot savings at one handy site. Among the huge spectrum of recent deals: $100 off a Dell home computing system; a Ford Ranger rental truck at Budget for $20 per day; and a free watch (with purchase) from Yves Rocher's boutique. **[fatwallet.com]**

NOT JUST FOR GEEKS

Techbargains.com This recent *Y-Life* Gold Star winner features great discounts on computer hardware and electronic gadgets of every stripe. Also, click Family Coupons to get free shipping and dollars-off offers from **BananaRepublic.com, DisneyStore.com,** and dozens of other brand-name merchants. **[techbargains.com]**

DEAL ALERTS

Amazing-Bargains.com Here you can find a, well, *amazing* array of offers, rebates, and discounts in a plethora of categories—about 100 in Home & Garden alone. Sign up for the Alert newsletter so you don't miss out. **[amazing-bargains.com]**

PAMELA DES BARRES

ALEX AND LALIA/GETTY IMAGES

CAREERS

WORK AT HOME

SET UP SHOP

FreeAgent.com: Resources Have you been downsized, replaced, or pink-slipped? Jokes about working in bunny slippers aside, freelancing from home offers flexibility—plus isolation, feast-or-famine work flow, and lost benefits. Do you have what it takes to make it on your own? This site provides advice on how to market your services and conduct yourself professionally. Then go ahead and buy the bunny slippers. **[freeagent.com/resource]**

MOM ON TOP

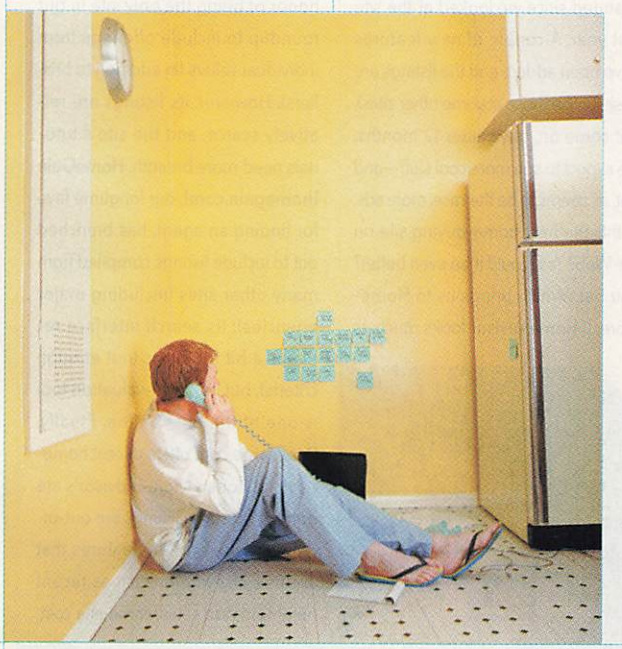
iVillage: Home Business Although geared toward "mompreneurs," the articles and discussions here ring true for mom-and-pop operations. Topics include advice on how to maintain a healthy work style (remember, you're one box of chocolates away from becoming an unemployed soap-opera addict). **[ivillage.com/topics/work/homebus]**

FRINGE BENEFITS

Insure.com: Health Insurance One of the biggest challenges to the self-employed is maintaining medical coverage without breaking the bank. Insure's FAQ has tips about extending your benefits under Cobra, choosing a health care plan, and qualifying for group rates. The Get a Quote section lets you compare plans in certain states; if you live outside those areas, you might need to contact **Small Business Service Bureau, Inc. [sbsb.com]** to see what's available. **[insure.com/health]**

TAX MATTERS

IRS.gov: Small Business and Self Employed Community April 15 is on the horizon, and when you don't have an employer making automatic deductions, dealing with Uncle Sam can be a part-time job in itself. For a general rundown on self-employment obligations, read the tax-related articles at FreeAgent.com. Then hop over to this site for specific regulations and resources, categorized by professional field, as well as a ton of PDF forms, forms, and more forms. **[www.irs.gov/smallbiz]** HEIDI LAFLECHE



HOME OFFICE: ROBIN LYNNE GIBSON/GETTY IMAGES; GARDEN TOOLS: COURTESY OF SMITH & HAWKEN

NET-BRANDED CREDIT

Hard plastic from e-commerce sites

TRAVELOCITY.COM: WORLD MASTERCARD Every dollar charged on the card earns a point toward free or discounted travel through Travelocity. Unlike some frequent-flier cards, this one has no blackout or expiration dates. The card charges a 13.4 percent annual percentage rate. It carries no annual fee the first year, but cardholders will pay $50 per year after that. **[travelocitycard.com]**

EBAY First USA levies a 14.99 percent APR on the eBay Platinum Visa card, which carries no annual fee. You're entitled to receive a onetime $10 credit toward eBay charges if you agree to have them automatically placed on your monthly statement. **[ebay.com]**

PAYPAL Practical for frequent eBay buyers and sellers, the PayPal ATM/debit card links to your bank account and lets you easily pay for online auctions and offline purchases. When used as an ATM card, there's a $1 service fee—so don't leave home without your regular bank card, too. **[paypal.com]**

SHOPPING

GARDENING GOODS

A TRUSTED SOURCE

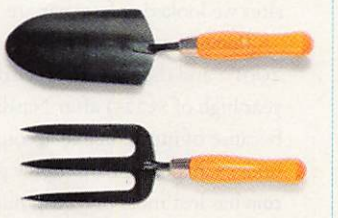
National Gardening Founded as a nonprofit network of home cultivators in 1972, National Gardening now bills itself as the Net's largest syndicator of horticultural advice, and it provides abundant information for all U.S. climes. The association's garden shop stocks everything from windowsill planters to greenhouses, while the Buyers Guide provides links to dozens of quality dealers. **[garden.org]**

THE SEED KING

Burpee With a century and a quarter in the biz, Burpee is a trusted name. Browse the copious catalog of herb, flower, and vegetable seeds, and get frequent gift and discount incentives with your online orders. **[burpee.com]**

DIGGING THE DIRT

Smith & Hawken This company imports fine European tools and markets its own brand of English-styled implements for pruning, digging, watering, and composting. Smith & Hawken is geared toward gardeners of means, but not everything is expensive: The heirloom hand trowel costs $15. And any plebe can seek free advice from the Garden Guru. **[smithandhawken.com]** DONALD MILLER



WE TEST ONE CATEGORY IN DEPTH...ENVELOPES, PLEASE BY ALAN COHEN

BEST HOME-BUYING SITES

[homeadvisor.com] is a boon to prospective buyers—and with its no-fee listings, the site is a risk-free proposition for real estate agents as well. Little wonder that it's back in first place for the second year running. Plenty of other worthy resources can also help you grasp the complex world of home mortgages, fix that fixer-upper, and assist with the move. Your next home may not be a castle, but these sites will improve the odds.

This ought to be a great time for home-buying sites. Interest rates are at their lowest levels in years, and houses are selling at record levels. Even in the months after September 11, sales continued to grow, according to the National Association of Realtors, which estimates that more than 50 percent of home buyers now turn to the Web for help. Still, several of the sites we looked at last year are now struggling to survive.

Homestore.com lost $106.6 million in the third quarter of 2001—and then saw its stock drop to $3.60 a share (from its year high of $37.25) after Nasdaq halted trading of its shares because of questionable accounting practices. **Homes.com** is under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. And **HomeSeekers.com** has lost most of its top management.

What went wrong? According to Blanche Evans, editor of **Realty Times [realtytimes.com]**, the sites failed to generate successful leads for real estate agents, who paid hefty fees to subscribe—and now those brokers are pulling back. "Realtors are used to putting an ad in a paper and getting a call from someone who wants to see that house that day," says Evans. "On the Internet, that person may not be ready to buy for six months."

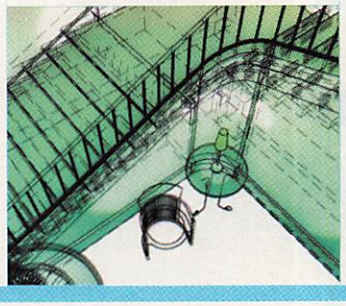
But there's good news: Some sites do get it. With its extensive tutorials and financing tools, **MSN: HomeAdvisor**

AND THE WINNERS ARE . . .

BEST OVERALL

MSN: HOMEADVISOR [homeadvisor.com]

In just about every way, HomeAdvisor bests the competition: It's easier to use, its neighborhood statistics are more thorough, it's better organized. And while its chief rival, **Homestore.com**, claims to have more listings, HomeAdvisor has more than enough to keep you house-hunting for a few months. That said, we need to temper our enthusiasm, because not much has changed since we looked at the site last year. A couple of new features have been added, and the listings are fresh (unlike those at some other sites), but come on, guys, after 12 months, we expect to see more cool stuff—and not, as seems to be the case, more ads. Is this the best home-buying site on the Web? Yes. Could it be even better? You bet. Which brings us to Homestore. If HomeAdvisor looks much as it did last year, Homestore looks as if it's been frozen in ice. Sure, we still like the gigantic database of listings (1.7 million strong) and the ability to search for homes with virtual tours, but the site's design was stale two years ago, and its school and neighborhood reports are awkwardly integrated. **Yahoo! Real Estate [realestate.yahoo.com]** holds the honor of being the only site in our roundup to include offerings from individual sellers (in addition to brokers). However, its listings are relatively scarce, and the site's tutorials need more breadth. **HomeGain [homegain.com]**, our longtime fave for finding an agent, has branched out to include listings compiled from many other sites (including major agencies); its search interface remains a bit too basic (not enough criteria), but its home-valuation tool is one of the best online. Finally, **RealHome.com** offers decent home-buying tutorials (HomeAdvisor's are better), but some listings are out-of-date and many of the features that are free elsewhere, such as recent neighborhood sales, come at a cost.



DRIVEWAY: MATTHEW HRANEK/A+C ANTHOLOGY

A CLOSER LOOK: LOCAL MARKETS

REALTY TIMES: LOCAL MARKET CONDITIONS

[realtytimes.com]

Are prices rising? Falling? Are homes lingering on the market or selling faster than tickets to a Mel Brooks musical? Click this link on the Realty Times home page and you'll get city-by-city reports from local real estate agents who magnanimously share their insights with you (okay, so they want you to check out their listings, too). Reports tend to be brief, but you'll get a quick and useful glimpse of how the local market is faring (although, for some cities, the scoop can be a month old or more).

MSN: HOMEADVISOR: HOME VALUATION

[homeadvisor.com]

Most home-buying hubs offer some version of this tool, but HomeAdvisor's is our favorite. It not only offers the exact address and price of local sales, but also plots those homes on a map so that you can see accurately where they are. The site can even link you to those nearby properties for sale (at least on HomeAdvisor), giving you a feel for the market. Still more info can further help you negotiate the price you're willing to pay: when the house was built, its lot size, past sale prices (if applicable), and previous sale prices for similar homes nearby.

REALESTATEJOURNAL: CITY PROFILES

[realestatejournal.com/cityprofiles]

Here's another ubiquitous tool: the city profile. But no other home-buying site provides this level of market detail. You'll find statistics on local sales, such as the median home-resale price, and what a single-family, four-bedroom home typically costs in various parts of the region ($353,000 in New York's Westchester County and a staggering $1.14 million in Manhattan, as of 1999). You get all sorts of tidbits about the city, too, such as the number of golf courses and zoos. Heck, money's not the only consideration.

PLANET REALTOR

[planetrealtor.com]

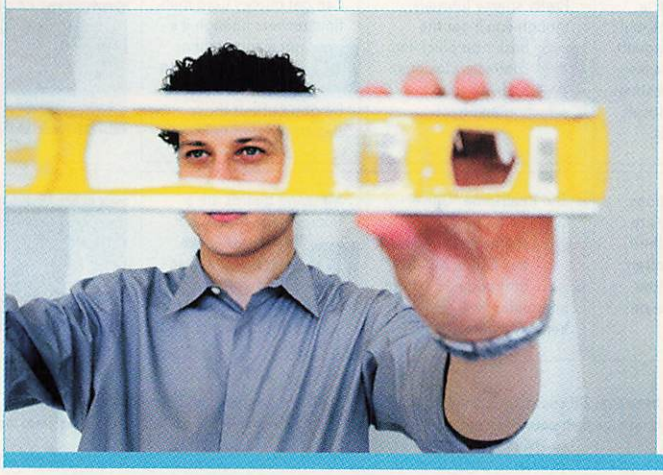
Granted, this site won't help everyone, as it provides links to just 20 state associations of real estate agents. But a click on Florida reveals listings from all over the state—and in the months (and years) to come, you might be seeing more such regionally based sites, where you can get a full range of local listings. New rules in the realty industry are enabling brokers to share listings online, which means that your neighborhood agent may soon have expanded offerings. How this bodes for the major national hubs is unclear. But if these local sites grow and prosper, they'll become yet another viable means of finding your next home.

BEST APARTMENT RENTALS

HOMESTORE.COM

[homestore.com]

If Homestore's apartment-listing section looks familiar, that's because it's the site formerly known as SpringStreet, last year's winner for best rentals. What we liked about this site then holds true now: It's got more listings than the competition (909 apartment rentals between $1,000 and $2,000 in San Francisco) and more extras, too (for some listings you can schedule appointments directly from the site or take a virtual tour). Search for corporate or senior housing, or rentals near a specific college. And the site caters to all budgets: Listings range from cut-rate to luxury. Note, however, that in some big cities, the most affordable listings often come from pay-for partner sites that require a separate registration and payment.



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BEST FIXER-UPPER RESOURCE

IMPROVENET

[improvenet.com]

The fixer-up home may come cheap, but there's another price to pay: the fixing-up part. ImproveNet helps you manage renovation projects of all sizes. For the small stuff, such as plumbing repairs, you can schedule appointments online. For ambitious tasks, such as taking out a wall, ImproveNet sends your job description to some 30,000 contractors; those interested then contact you with their offers. And for any middle-of-the-night home-owning hassles (like water filling up the basement while you're watching *Nick at Nite*), browse the helpful message boards and FAQs.

BEST RELOCATION HELP

MONSTERMOVING.COM

[monstermoving.com]

Most of the major home-buying sites have a relocation section that will invariably serve up packing tips and perhaps link you to a mover or two. Our advice: Skip these sites and head to Monstermoving. Sure, it's got the tips and the checklists, but it also has a wealth of terrific resources, such as a free tool to cancel, add, and transfer utilities and newspaper subscriptions (it works with most major vendors); a free change-of-address service; links to temporary housing providers and truck rental companies; and instant estimates from movers. Save some time, save your back, save some bucks.

BEST BUYER'S TUTORIALS

MSN: HOMEADVISOR

[homeadvisor.com]

Buying a home isn't that big a deal—if you've already purchased a jet airplane, a small company, or anything else that takes months, requires lawyers, and involves more jargon than a neurology textbook. Good thing HomeAdvisor's tutorials can walk you through. It's a long walk, to be sure, but you'll learn everything you'd ever want to know about the home-buying process, from what questions to ask when you tour a house to what kind of escape clause to put into a contract in case your financing falls through. It's all ex-

pertly presented in readable, tip-laden bursts that smarten you up without wearing you down.

BEST NEW-HOME LISTINGS

NEWHOME SOURCE

[newhomesource.com]

One sure way to avoid rusting pipes, rotting walls, or the ghost in the attic is to buy or build a brand-spanking-new abode. NewHome Source is rather new itself, having come online only last year. But its database of freshly constructed properties is more than 200,000 listings strong, compiled from the site's 66 builder-partners. Most listings are chock-full of pictures and floor plans, and if you already have the land, you can search for a builder to put up the house.

BEST REAL ESTATE NEWS

REALTY TIMES

[realtytimes.com]

You don't need to follow the publishing industry to buy a John Grisham novel, but real estate is a different matter. With prices and interest rates constantly fluctuating, home buyers who aren't in a hurry need to know the best time, and place, to buy. Realty Times does a crack job of keeping you up-to-speed on industry trends, and its Monday Mortgage Review gives a good overview of where interest rates are, where they are heading, and what it all means to you. Particularly useful is the Local Market Conditions link, where agents weigh in on how their own markets are faring. (For more on local resources, see "A Closer Look," opposite page.)

BEST FINANCING TIPS

REALESTATEJOURNAL

[realestatejournal.com]

For most home buyers, financing is the trickiest part of the process. Do you want an adjustable-rate loan? Is it time to refinance? Beats us—but not the ace reporters and analysts at RealEstateJournal, a *Wall Street Journal* site. Learn about prepayment penalties (often a nasty surprise when you go to refinance your mortgage), float-down options on loans (letting you borrow at a fixed rate and adjust it later if the market changes), condominium ownership, and why raiding your IRA to finance a home might not be prudent. The best part: Unlike WSJ.com's main site, content here is free—leaving you with more bucks for that down payment. ■

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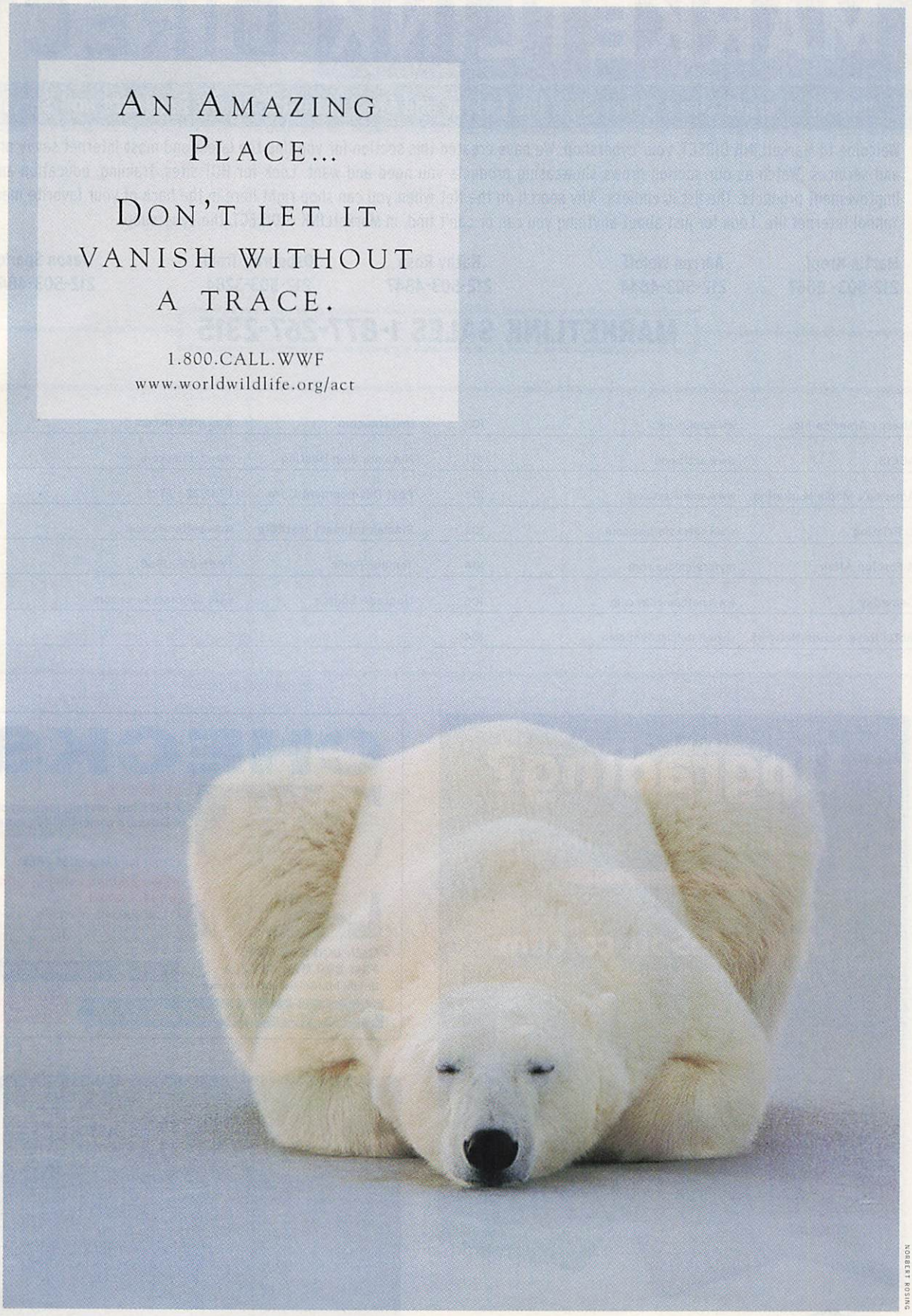
THE BASICS	LISTINGS	TOOLS	RESEARCH	EXTRAS/CAVEATS	OVERALL
MSN: HOMEADVISOR [homeadvisor.com]	A- Some 1.2 million homes, with more listings than Homestore in some areas, but far fewer in others. Listings are nicely presented, but the virtual tours are few.	A- Slick search interface. Home Tracker e-mails new listings and tells you when a listing that you saved sells. Excellent home-valuation tool.	A First-rate home-buying tutorials; lots of stats on neighborhood demographics (even air quality). Good insurance and financing calculators.	B Lots of content, but lots of ads, too. Apply online for a loan. Apartment-rentals info lags behind Homestore's. Rarely, if ever, more than one photo per house.	A-
HOMESTORE.COM [homestore.com]	A Some 1.7 million homes, many with multiple photos. More virtual tours than HomeAdvisor. Many listings offer an e-mail link directly to the Realtor.	C+ So-so search interface (though the virtual tours are good). Home-valuation tool tells selling price of nearby homes, but often not their size—not much help.	B Must fill out long form, with all contact info, to access local school reports. Little detail in these or neighborhood reports. Tutorials cover only the basics.	B Site looks as dated as a *Happy Days* rerun. Excellent apartment-rental section. Thumbs down for "articles" that are often plugs for advertisers.	B
YAHOO! REAL ESTATE [realestate.yahoo.com]	B About a million homes, but sparse selection in many of our test areas. Upside: Among the top sites, only this one lists homes for sale by owner.	B- Limited search options, but can search for virtual tours. Home-valuation tool tells selling price, but not size, of nearby homes—not much help.	B Good school and neighborhood stats. Real estate news stories from Inman News. Well-written, tip-laden Q&As—but there aren't nearly enough of them.	B Decent moving section. Real Estate message boards either nearly empty or filled with spam. Some searches returned multiple copies of the same listing.	B
HOMEGAIN [homegain.com]	C More than 800,000 properties, from multiple sites (including fee-based ones, where you'll have to pay to view the full listing). Some links are outdated.	B- Limited search criteria. The site's bread-and-butter tool is its agent-finder, which asks you some questions and then gets proposals from various agents.	C Pretty sparse tutorials, though you'll get the basics on purchase contracts, closings, and—of course—selecting an agent.	C- Can get quotes from multiple movers (though it's not a comprehensive list). Something really needs to be done about those dead/outdated links.	C
REALHOME.COM [realhome.com]	C- Some 800,000 homes. Small selection in many areas. Listings occasionally outdated; some failed to tell the number of bedrooms in a home—inexcusable.	D+ Limited search options. The few tools here are provided by third parties who often require fees (the same tools are free on other sites).	B The RealHome "University" is a bit oversold—HomeAdvisor does this better. Neighborhood and school information will cost you here (and here alone).	D Message boards are a good idea in theory, but RealHome's have been virtually abandoned. And did we mention all the stuff you've got to pay for?	C-

HOW WE RATED THE SITES: We compared the quality and quantity of listings for homes in several ZIP codes, including Framingham, MA; Staten Island, NY; and San Francisco. We looked at how easy—or hard—it was to find homes with particular features. Then we put each site's tutorials through their paces. Testing took place in December 2001; grades do not reflect upgrades since then.



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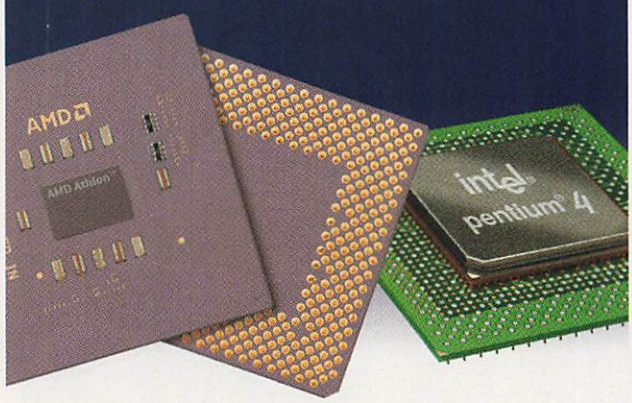

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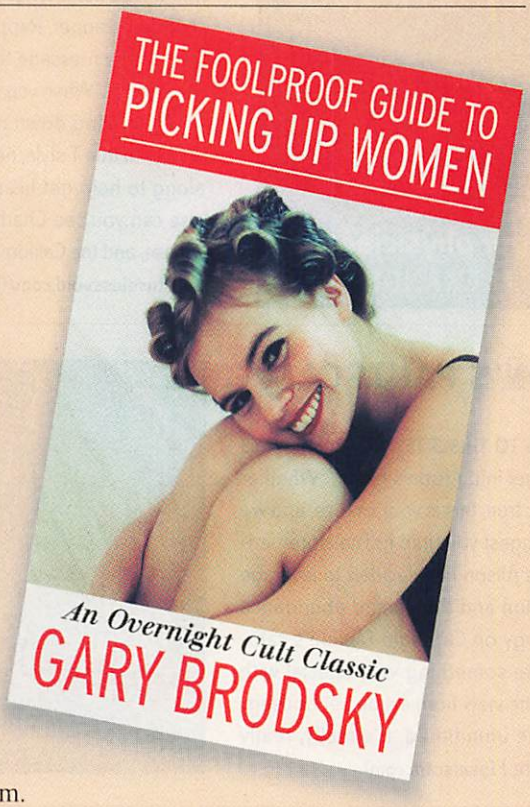

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BY SCOTT ALEXANDER

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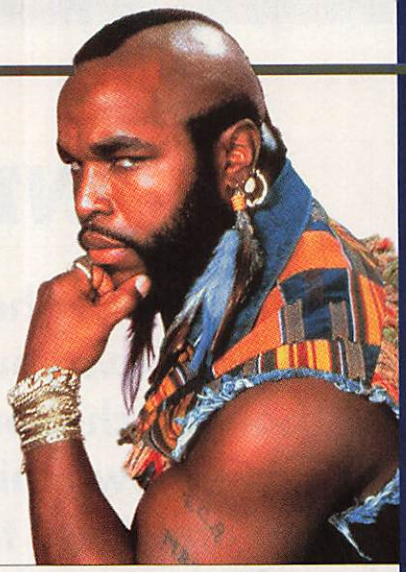

MR. T: THESPIAN, WRESTLER, NANCY REAGAN confidant, rapper. Rapper? Oh, yes...rapper. And what a message this rapper has for today's youth: "When you put down one mother, you're putting down mothers all over the world." In true T style, he's brought his friends along to help get his point across. Where else can you see Charlton Heston, DangerMouse, and the California raisins on the same bill? **[uselessvoid.com/flash/tymr.swf]**

ALISON'S PANTSCAM

ACCORDING TO THIS SITE, "YOU'VE ALWAYS wanted to get into Alison's pants." Whether or not that's true, this is your chance, and we strongly suggest you grab it. The aforementioned Miss Alison has decided to leverage her education and the absurd abundance of technology on Carnegie Mellon's campus to share something very special with the world: the view from inside her trousers. (Note to the uninitiated: It's really, really dark in there.) **[pantscam.com]**

JUST NOT CRICKET

IF THERE'S ONE THING THAT RAISES A cricketer's ire, it's badgers. Every time you turn around, they're burrowing onto the pitch, making ruts and humps in the finely manicured grass and using their razor-sharp teeth to rip the home team limb from limb. Now's your chance to club the little buggers into oblivion. Act quickly, though. Simeon Pantsgibbon and the rest of Maiden-Over-Firkle's brave batsmen need to finish the over. **[bossmonster.com/e4/cricket/cricket.html]**

PSEUDODICTIONARY.COM

QUAINT THOUGH IT MAY BE, THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS WOEFULLY LIMITED. JUST ASK anyone who's tried to find a way to express that something is more than damned, but less than damndest. The correct answer is *damnder*, but do you think you're going to find that in a conventional dictionary? How about the opposite of *insert*? (*Outsert.*) Or what to call the gastric distress brought on by Mexican food? (*PBS, aka Post-Burrito Syndrome.*) Can you believe it? The next time you run across something that's just like a bucket full of bashed crabs, you'll have a word for it—*mangky*. **[pseudodictionary.com]**

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FEATURES»

WIRED HOOPS pages 56-61

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IF WEB ADDRESSES CAME TO LIFE pages 62-69, 79

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TIME TO FACE THE MUSIC pages 70-73

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NET SCAMS pages 74-79

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- FTC BROADENS WARNINGS TO MARKETERS OF BIOTERRORISM DEFENSE PRODUCTS | www.ftc.gov/opa/2002/01/round2web.htm
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THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL pages 80-85

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CLICK! HOME & OFFICE page 30

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CLICK! INCREDIBLY USEFUL SITES pages 32-33

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pages 34-35

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STYLE: SITES & SCENES page 38

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STYLE: BAZAAR page 39

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CONTENT pages 40-41

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COOL TOOLS pages 43-46

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WEB USER pages 48-50

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PRETTY STRANGE page 108

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WEB GUIDE»

NEW, NOTABLE & FUN pages 88-89

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ENTERTAINMENT & SPORTS
pages 90-91

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TRAVEL & RECREATION pages 92-93

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MONEY & SHOPPING pages 94-97

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WEB LAB: GOLD STAR SITES
pages 98-100

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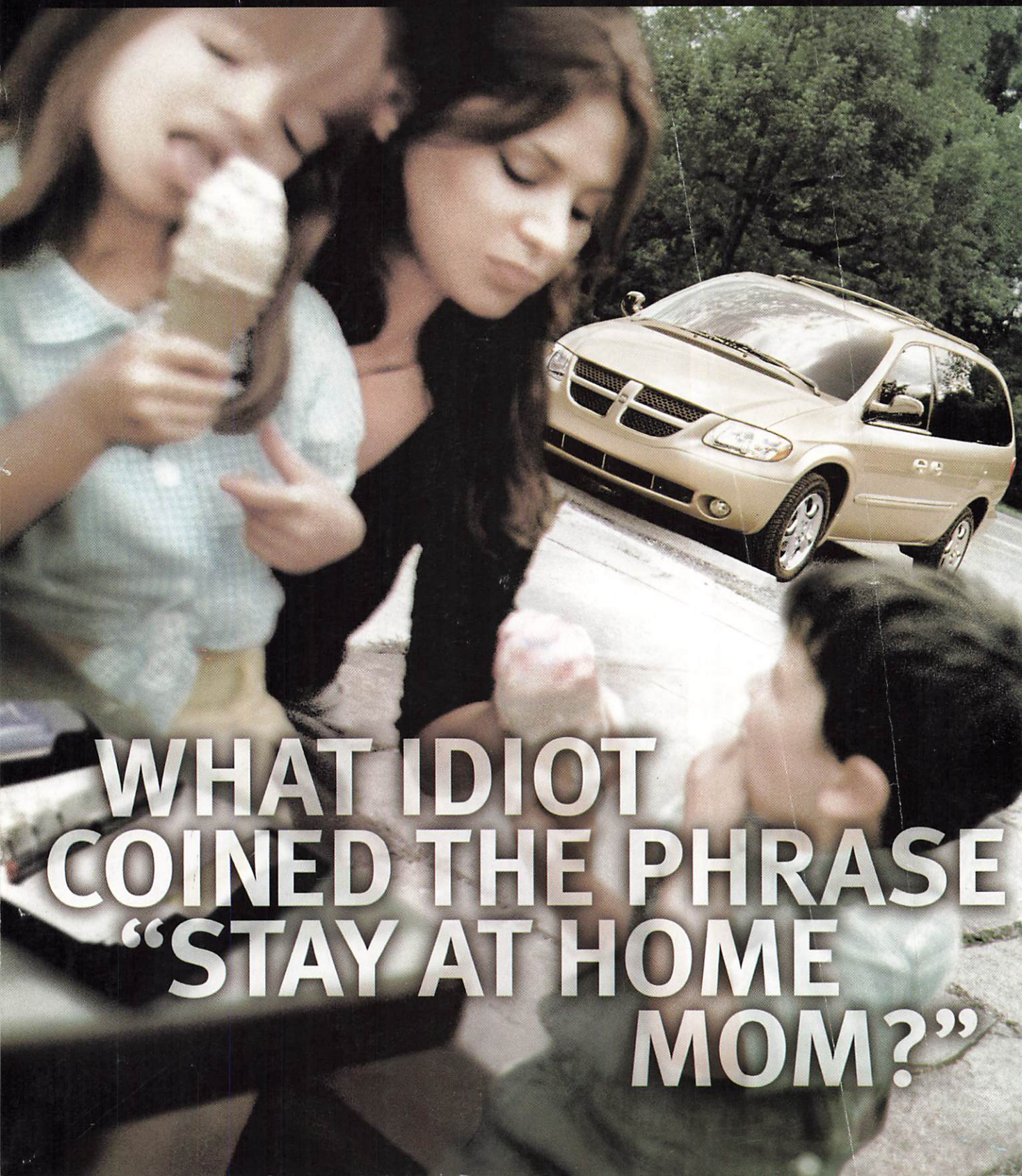

WHAT IDIOT COINED THE PHRASE "STAY AT HOME MOM?"